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DECEMBER 2006

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My dream is to carve my own path.

I was never one to follow maps.



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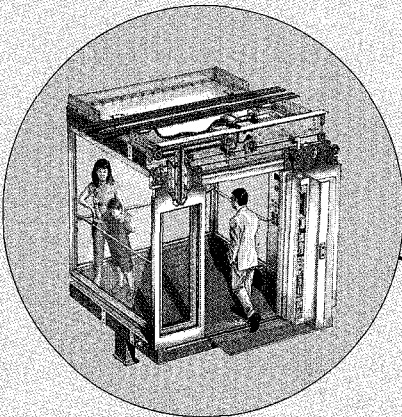
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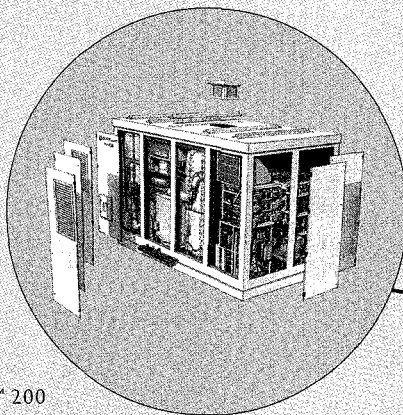
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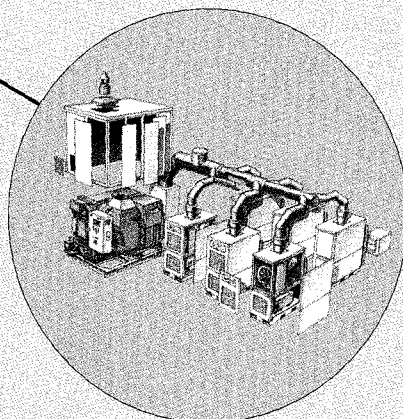
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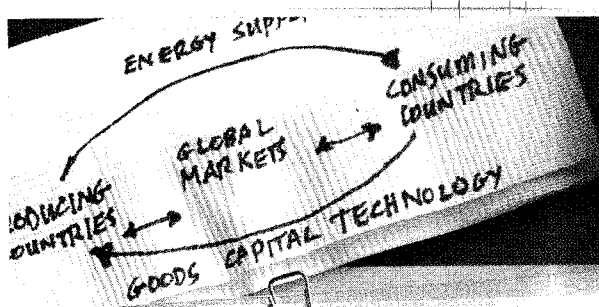
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DAVID J. O'REILLY
CHAIRMAN & CEO
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Energy will be one of the defining issues of this century. One thing is clear: the era of easy oil is over. What we all do next will determine how well we meet the energy needs of the entire world in this century and beyond.

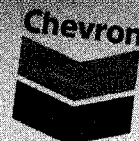
Demand is soaring like never before. As populations grow and economies take off, millions in the developing world are enjoying the benefits of a lifestyle that requires increasing amounts of energy. In fact, some say that in 20 years the world will consume 40% more oil than it does today. At the same time, many of the world's oil and gas fields are maturing. And new energy discoveries are mainly occurring in places where resources are difficult to extract, physically, economically and even politically. When growing demand meets tighter supplies, the result is more competition for the same resources.

We can wait until a crisis forces us to do something. Or we can commit to working together, and start by asking the tough questions: How do we meet the energy needs of the developing world and those of industrialized nations? What role will renewables and alternative energies play? What is the best way to protect our environment? How do we accelerate our conservation efforts? Whatever actions we take, we must look not just to next year, but to the next 50 years.

At Chevron, we believe that innovation, collaboration and conservation are the cornerstones on which to build this new world. We cannot do this alone. Corporations, governments and every citizen of this planet must be part of the solution as surely as they are part of the problem. We call upon scientists and educators, politicians and policy-makers, environmentalists, leaders of industry and each one of you to be part of reshaping the next era of energy.

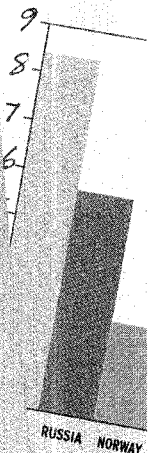
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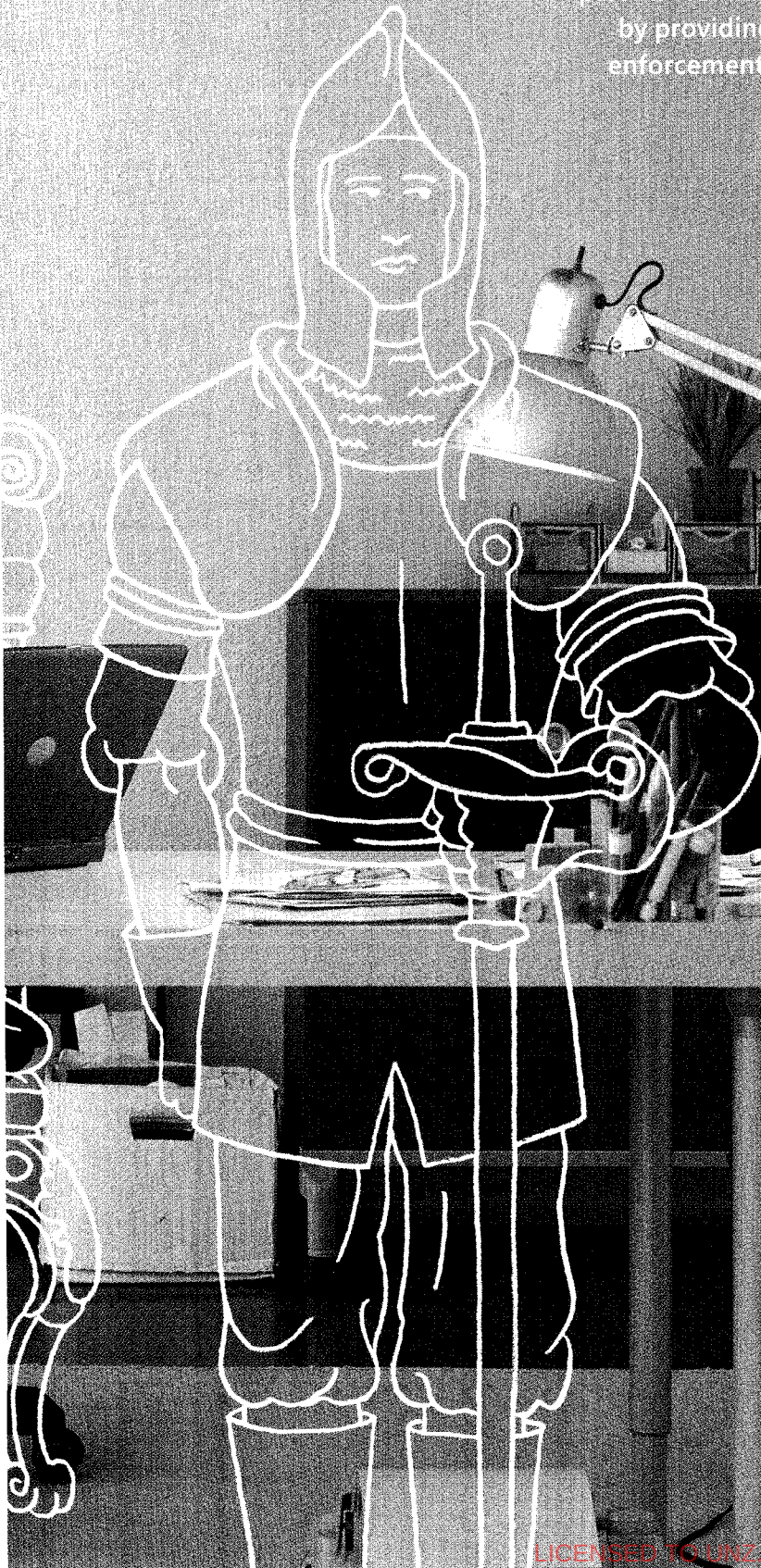
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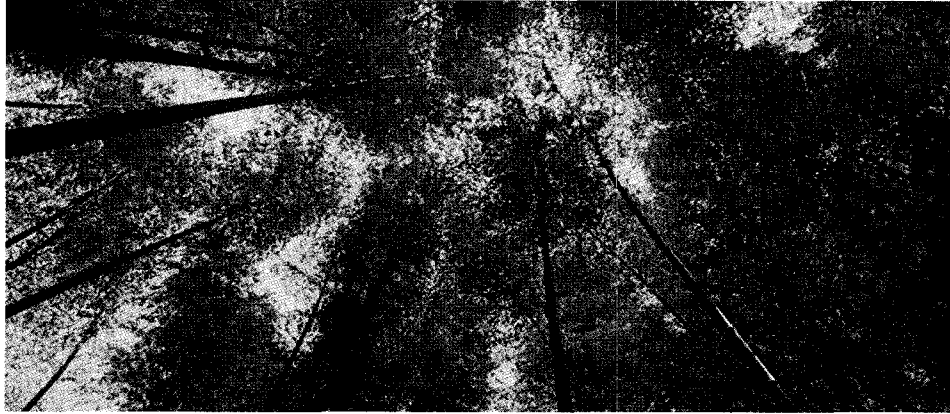
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and Philip Morris USA

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For a company as newsworthy as ours, at times it can be hard to see the forest for the trees. But to look beyond immediate challenges and position our company for long-term success, we have to keep the whole forest squarely in sight.

And that's a vision we feel is worth sharing.

Our name is Altria Group.



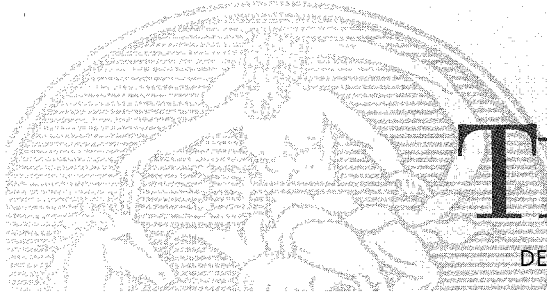
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Who are the most influential figures in American history? *The Atlantic* recently asked ten eminent historians. The result was *The Atlantic's* Top 100—and some insight into the nature of influence and the contingency of history. Was Walt Disney really more influential than Elizabeth Cady Stanton? Benjamin Spock than Richard Nixon? Elvis Presley than Lewis and Clark? John D. Rockefeller than Bill Gates? Babe Ruth than Frank Lloyd Wright? Let the debates begin
by Ross Douthat

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It wouldn't be easy. But it wouldn't be impossible. A reporter travels the world to find the weaknesses a terrorist could exploit *by William Langewiesche*

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Our man in Shanghai samples budget beer, survives subway scimmages, and starts living the contradictions of China's breakneck modernization
by James Fallows

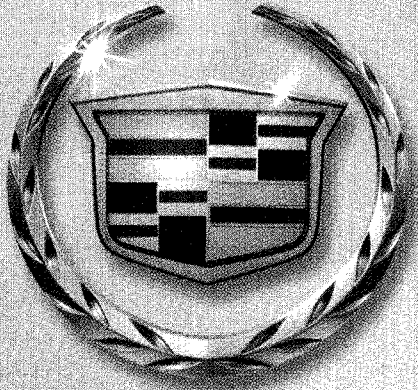
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Fifty years ago, yoga was the province of California communes and fringy New Agers. Now it's teetering on the brink of overexposure and commodification. So, is it a spiritual antidote to the upscale Western lifestyle, or just the latest manifestation? *by Hanna Rosin*

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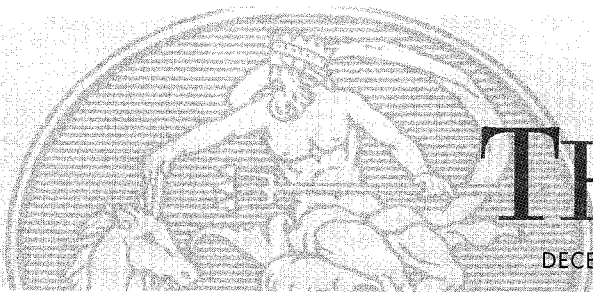
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YOUR TURN: THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AMERICANS

Who didn't make the Top 100 list but should have? Compare your nominations with those of other readers

INTERVIEW: YOGA FOR THE MASSES

Hanna Rosin, the author of "Striking a Pose," talks about the implications of fusing church and gym

SLIDESHOW: OUR MAN IN CHINA

Atlantic national correspondent James Fallows narrates photos from his new life in Shanghai

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The deadbeat seconds device, or the art of making time stand still...

Towards the late 17th century, as clocks were becoming increasingly precise, watchmakers added a hand finally enabling them to measure seconds. These "clocks", which became "pendulum clocks" thanks to the invention of the pendular balance by the Dutch watchmaker Huygens, were almost naturally equipped with a 1 metre-long balance with a period of 1 second. The dial was marked out into 60 subdivisions so that the hand could jump from one second to the next.

When the first watches indicating seconds were made, some 18th-century watchmakers wanted to achieve the same visual effect as on clocks. To do so, they invented systems extending the period of the balances, the best-known being the "crown-wheel escapement with pendulum" or the huge balance by Mr. Pouzait. Nonetheless, these systems were rapidly abandoned, since they were detrimental to precision.

Thus, without an additional system, the hand started to beat out the half-second, the most widespread frequency of the time.

The extreme ease with which time could be read off by a hand beating the seconds, without moving during this same second, gave 19th century watchmakers some new ideas.

Three systems known as "deadbeat seconds" came into use:

The first consisted of a small additional gear train activated by a spring connected to the mainspring. Each second, the hand was released by the watch escapement. This so-called "independent deadbeat seconds" offered the advantage of not affecting the precision of the watch and could be disconnected at will by the user.

The second comprised an additional gear-train running from the escape-wheel to an additional seconds wheel equipped with 60 teeth held by a spring. This extremely simple system was extremely prejudicial to precision.

In the third, a so-called "single-beat escapement" waited for the balance to complete two oscillations in order for the escape-wheel to move forward every second. These escapements were extremely popular in watches produced in China, since according to Chinese philosophy, this corresponded to making time stand still. The latter was no longer in control, since it was mastered by the wearer...

Finally today, the TOURBILLON SOUVERAIN is equipped with a "natural deadbeat seconds" device. The latter is mounted on one of the wheels of the constant-force device and cannot in any way affect the precision of the watch.

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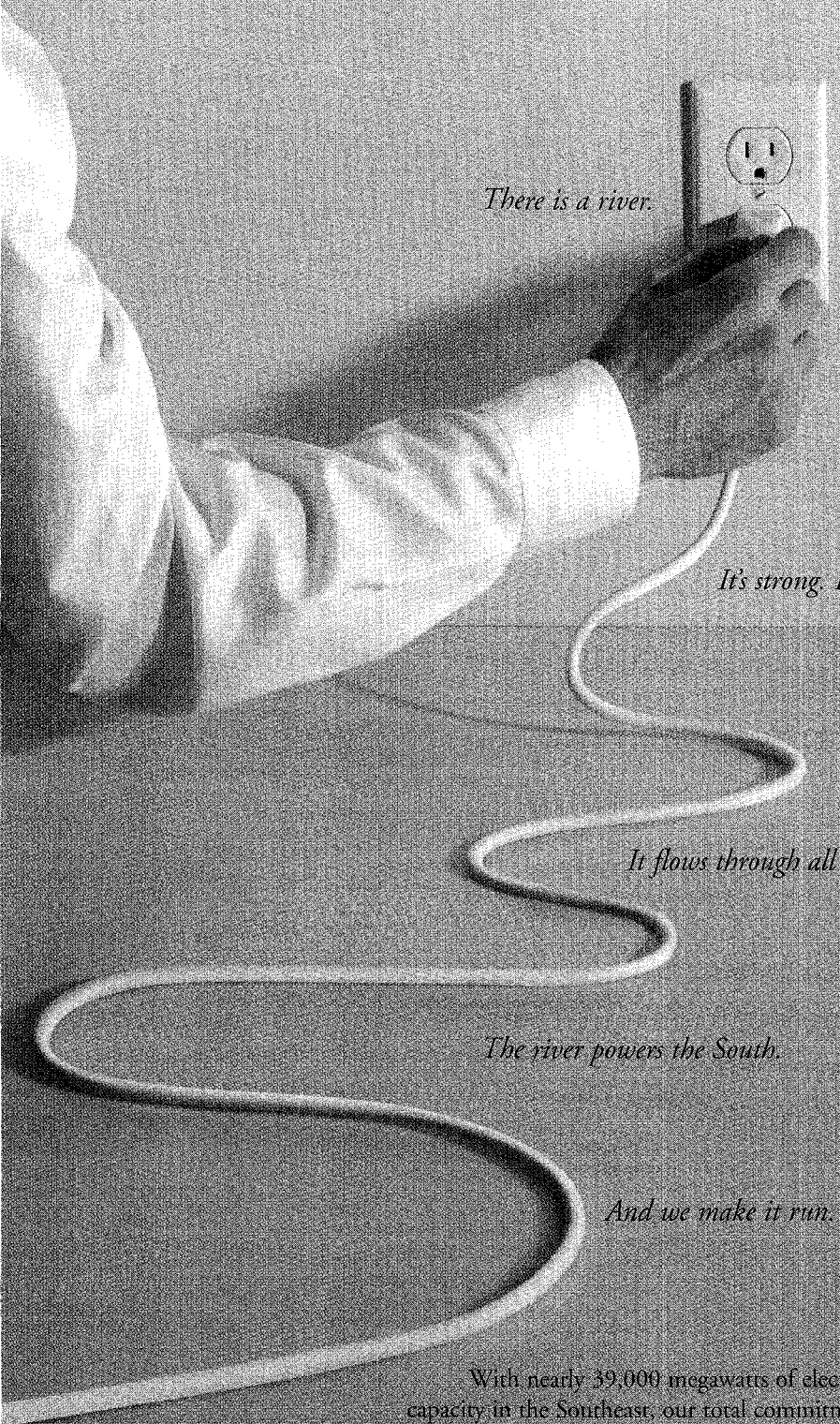
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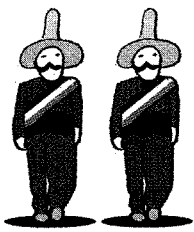
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DECEMBER 1

Mexican Standoff

After a bitterly contested election, Mexico gets not one but two new presidents today—though not officially. The recognized victor, conservative Felipe Calderón, is expected to advocate U.S.-friendly immigration and trade policies. His leftist opponent, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has refused to acknowledge defeat and has vowed to establish his own parallel government.

DECEMBER 2

A Very Happy Unbirthday

Fidel Castro gets a proper party today, the fiftieth anniversary of his landing in Cuba to lead the revolution. Bedridden by intestinal bleeding on his actual birthday, in August, Castro "celebrated" then by sharing yogurt, good times, and matching red shirts with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez.

DECEMBER 2-8

Tangled Web

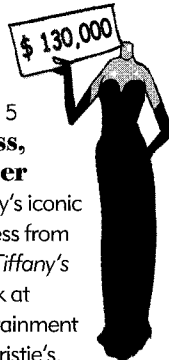
ICANN, the nonprofit group that controls Internet domain

names, meets this week in São Paulo to debate policy options for the host of dot-com and dot-org alternatives seeking places on the Web. Overseen by the prim United States, the organization miffed other countries in May when it voted not to allow the "adults-only" .xxx suffix.

DECEMBER 3

Damned If You Don't

With unchecked power, majority approval, and all the airtime he wants, President Hugo Chávez is widely favored to win today's Venezuelan election. The opposition party has considered a boycott, a prospect that Chávez parried by threatening to call a referendum that would allow him to rule until 2031.



DECEMBER 5

Little Dress, Big Number

Holly Golightly's iconic little black dress from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* is on the block at today's entertainment auction at Christie's, where it's expected to fetch somewhere between \$90,000 and \$130,000 (brown sack of pastry not included).

ALSO THIS MONTH:

Free at Last

SpiralFrog, a digital music service aimed at challenging Apple's pay model with free (but ad-supported) downloads, launches this month. The small print: SpiralFrog tunes aren't iPod-compatible, and regular site visits are required to keep them playing.



Baby Steps

Iraq's leaders have promised that the growing (though dubiously qualified) Iraqi army will handle security in most, even all, of the country by year's end. Iraqi troops may still depend on coalition forces for command, support, and logistics.

Containing Kim

Following North Korea's missile launches this summer, and its recent nuclear test, Japan will begin operations of new Patriot antimissile batteries in Okinawa by the end of the year, part of the U.S. attempt to contain Kim Jong Il's rogue state.

CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

DECEMBER 15

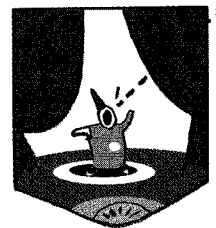
Show Me the Money

After a raft of corporate scandals, publicly traded companies today must begin disclosing, in "plain English," all compensation paid to their top executives, including the multifarious perks and options that have obscured such figures in the past. (A proposed "Couric clause"—as in Katie—would also have meant divulging salaries of top-earning nonexecutives, such as pro athletes, movie stars, and, yes, news anchors. It was ultimately dropped.)

DECEMBER 26

Mad for Mao

China's Mao Zedong museum will be completed by the end of the month, in time to commemorate the chairman's birthday. Located in his hometown of Shaoshan, the museum features over 6,500 of his personal effects (including his washbasin).



DECEMBER 30

Virtual Verdi

In an effort to breathe new life into a fusty art form, the Metropolitan Opera tonight kicks off an ambitious digital distribution program that will use special satellites and projectors to beam its operas to movie theaters in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

DECEMBER 31

The Morning After

Three years after it first roiled the FDA and intensified the

abortion debate, the Plan B emergency contraceptive will go on sale without a prescription no later than today—though only to adults. Studies suggest it will have minimal impact on rates of abortion and sexually transmitted disease.



DECEMBER 31

Putting It All Back Together

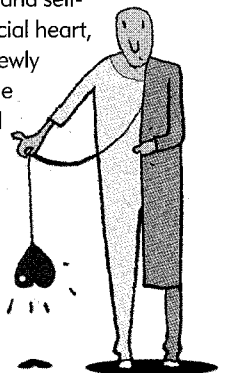
Sixteen months after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, the master plan for rebuilding is due by today. By taking a hands-off approach that leaves most planning to the city's seventy-three neighborhoods, state and national politicians have dodged the tough question of which, if any, neighborhoods should be abandoned.

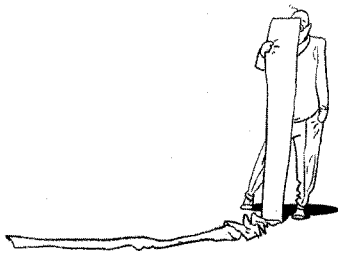
DECEMBER 31

Electric Ticker

Coming soon to a chest near you! Doctors will be equipped to implant the first fully self-contained and self-sufficient artificial heart, the AbioCor, newly approved by the FDA. In clinical trials, none of its recipients survived for more than eighteen months.

—MATTHEW QUIRK





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Declaring Victory?

James Fallows's article ("Declaring Victory," September *Atlantic*) is an extended take on the "police problem" theory of terrorism. Various bad actors have violated international law and need to be rounded up or suppressed. We have done that. End of story. Declare victory. We just need to cope with the residual terrorism that may continue, just like we cope with any other kind of crime.

It is certainly true that we have successfully degraded al-Qaeda. If the problem were only as Fallows describes it—"terrorists" and "hostile groups"—we would indeed be able to declare victory in the war on terrorism. However, nowhere in the article is the real issue ever mentioned: *state sponsors* of terrorism.

Terrorist groups take on the capabilities to harm us in substantial and sustained ways only if they have state sponsorship. Before 9/11, there were four contiguous state sponsors of terrorism in the Middle East: Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan (going from west to east). Two were gone by 2003. Since then, our performance has been less impressive. The current "failure" in Iraq is not because "we are vulnerable to the kind of warfare jihadists wage best," but because two flanking state sponsors of terrorism, Syria and Iran, have been able to act within Iraq—in terms of providing organization, logistics, supplies, and even personnel for terrorist acts—with complete impunity. Had we secured Iraq's borders in 2003, Iraq would be stable today. An indigent insurgency could not have sustained itself without outside support and safe havens.

Current events are not kind to Fallows's police-problem thesis, especially in light of what has taken place in Lebanon. Why is Hezbollah a problem, and what kind of problem is it? From where

did it obtain its 13,000 missiles, several thousand of which it fired into Israel? What about its military training and other weapons, like the sophisticated antitank rockets? The answer: From two state sponsors of terrorism, Iran and Syria.

During the Sandinista reign in Nicaragua in the mid-1980s, almost every terrorist group in the world had an office there, including the PLO, the ETA, and the IRA. Anyone counseling that terrorist groups should not be lumped together would have a hard time explaining their presence. They were, in fact, components of the Soviet foreign legion brought together by their common antipathy for the United States. They could be dealt with "locally" as individual problems only after the Soviet Union met its demise. The same is true of terrorist groups today. Remove the state sponsors, and the problem shrinks to the size suggested in Fallows's article. (That can be done by a variety of means—political, economic, diplomatic, etc.—short of military.) But to pretend that that has already happened and that we should declare victory is a dangerous delusion.

Richard R. Reilly

Former Special Assistant to President

Ronald Reagan

Vienna, Va.

James Fallows correctly points out that "the U.S. military has been responsible for the most dramatic recent improvement in American standing in the Islamic world" because of its efforts on behalf of tsunami victims, but he fails to mention that this has occasioned new strategic thinking at the Pentagon itself. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recently released a "National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism," which found that American humanitarian assistance is "key to demonstrating benevolence and goodwill abroad, and countering

ideological support for terrorism ... the enemy's center of gravity." Pentagon officials involved in writing counterterrorism strategy publicly acknowledged that "the American military's efforts to aid tsunami victims in Indonesia and to assist victims of Pakistan's earthquake did more to counter terrorist ideology than any attack mission." And the Navy's highest-ranking officer, Admiral Michael Mullen, has stated that the change in Muslim public opinion as a result of American aid is nothing less than "one of the defining moments of this new century."

Citing the "lessons learned from tsunami relief," General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently announced the Navy's launch of the dedicated hospital ship *Mercy* to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Bangladesh on an unprecedented, entirely humanitarian mission. The *Mercy* will be a free-floating medical clinic for the Muslims of Indonesia, who remain favorably disposed to the United States—a direct and lasting result of the American tsunami aid delivered more than a year ago.

Ken Ballen

President

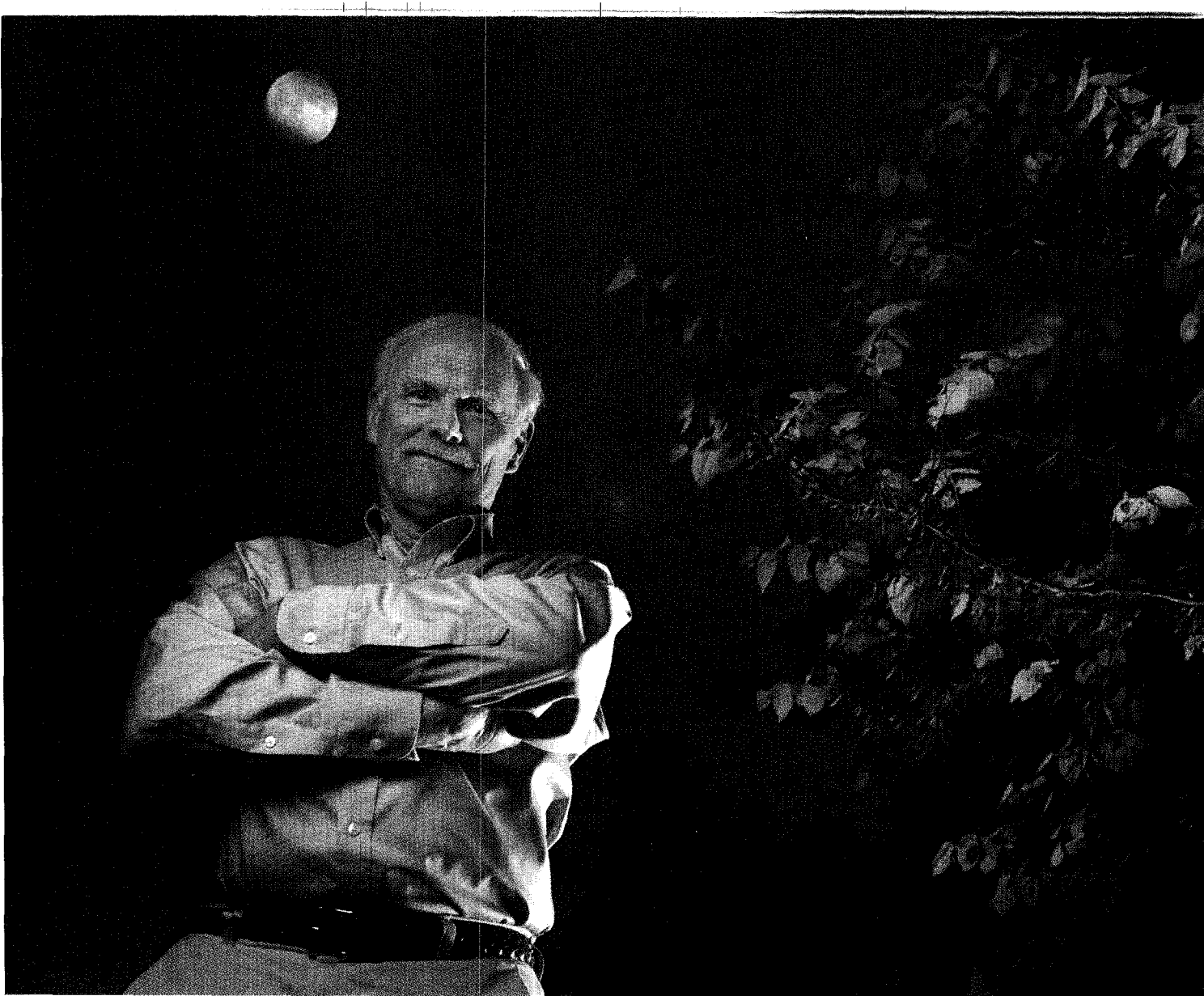
Terror Free Tomorrow

Washington, D.C.

James Fallows replies:

As Ken Ballen notes, the uniformed military has become highly attuned to the practical importance of cultural, political, and humanitarian gestures. After five years in Afghanistan and nearly four in Iraq, military leaders now emphasize paradoxes like those described in the Army's newly drafted Counterinsurgency Manual: the most effective weapon is the one that is not used; it is better to lead by example than by force; the more you protect yourself the more vulnerable you become; and so on.

It may simply be that combat leaders have more leeway to make such soft-sounding



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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerry Voeck".

Gerry Voeck

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points than do ordinary civilian politicians. Dwight Eisenhower, who had commanded the greatest fighting force the world had ever seen, could more easily warn about the "military-industrial complex" in his farewell speech than, say, Bill Clinton could have. This is the same logic by which John McCain is the most effective critic of torture and open-ended detention, and Colin Powell—if he had made his private doubts public—would have been the most influential critic of the plans to invade Iraq.

As for Richard Reilly, first let's separate his claims from what my article actually said. My point was not that "war" was never a proper response to terrorism. Rather, the argument was that five years on, an open-ended state of war did more harm than good—by uniting rather than dividing the enemy; by magnifying rather than diminishing terrorism's ability to distort our domestic life; and by increasing the chances of our reacting in ill-considered, self-destructive ways. The tools Reilly derides as police work—surveillance, penetration, cultivation of sources—were the ones that allowed British authorities to thwart the attempted airline-bombing plot this summer.

About his broader emphasis on the importance of state sponsorship: Sure, but how does that make a permanent state of war more sensible? Of course terrorist groups are more menacing if they have a government to protect them and to offer them a safe haven for operations. That is why it was important to drive the Taliban out of Afghanistan and therefore deny al-Qaeda its home base. But either we think that invasions are the right way to deal with problematic states or we don't. If Reilly is suggesting that other regimes on his state-sponsor list, including those in Iran and Syria, should also be removed by force, then the wartime concept makes sense—but nothing else about the proposal does. If, on the contrary, he is suggesting that such regimes should be undermined in the long run through means other than invasion, then we're back in the realm of using all the tools of national influence in a sustainable way, which is what my article discussed, and which shouldn't be given the label war.

A further word on practicalities: Reilly says the Iraq effort would have worked fine if only the borders had been sealed. This is one of a very long list of "if only" statements

about the war—if only U.S. troops had stopped the looting; if only they'd kept an eye on what was happening at Abu Ghraib; if only they'd had enough interpreters; if only they'd hired professionals rather than political hacks for the occupation staff, etc. Here are two hard questions about the war's execution, one flip, one not. The flip question is whether a group of infiltrators, having seized control of the U.S. government with the intent of harming America's reputation and interests as profoundly as they could, would have conducted the invasion and occupation of Iraq any differently from the way our real government has. The serious one is how the Bush administration, having placed such diplomatic, military, and political emphasis on a successful transformation of Iraq, could have gone about the job so haphazardly.

When North Korea Falls

For Robert Kaplan to echo Japan's right-wing nationalists by citing Japanese claims that Japanese colonialism doubled the average Korean's life expectancy ("When North Korea Falls," October *Atlantic*) is akin to quoting neo-Nazi claims that the Nazis improved trains and sanitation in occupied Europe. The assertion ignores the larger picture of suffering, degradation, and bestial cruelty inflicted on Koreans by the Japanese, and it insults the memory of the hundreds of thousands of Korean men, women, and children murdered, raped, and tortured by the Japanese colonial authorities.

Furthermore, Kaplan does not mention one of the more fascinating aspects of China's relationship with both Koreas. Much of today's Manchuria and part of Siberia once belonged to a powerful Korean kingdom, Koguryo. Had it not been for a military alliance between the Chinese kingdom of Tang and a rival Korean dynasty that ultimately bartered away all that land in exchange for Tang's help in defeating Koguryo, Manchuria might today still be Korean land.

Manchuria also harbors nearly 2 million ethnic Koreans, and would have even more were it not for China's brutal policy of deporting North Korean refugees back to North Korea. These facts may explain why China has blocked

access to historical sites attesting to Manchuria's Korean past and rewritten its histories to recast Koguryo as a part of China, despite the fact that even Zhou Enlai acknowledged that Koguryo was a Korean kingdom.

While these details may seem like arcane history to the West, Kaplan himself notes that the United States has a long record of underestimating historical-ethnic disputes. Spurred by new books and films on Koguryo, today's South Koreans, including the younger military officers, are surprisingly well aware of Korea's old stake in Manchuria. Should North Korea implode, China will have even more motivation to preempt Korean nationalism by creating a more malleable North Korean puppet state.

Clara Kyim

London, England

Brains by the Numbers

The graphics accompanying Richard Florida's "Where the Brains Are" (October *Atlantic*) are a textbook example of how to lie with statistics. Side-by-side color-coded maps of the United States show, for each county, the deviation from the national average in the number of college graduates per 100 residents in 1970 and in 2000. If the deviation had been given in percentage points, the graphic might—or might not—give honest visual support to Florida's contention that graduates have migrated to select cities.

Instead, the deviation has been measured in number of graduates per 100 residents. In the map for 1970, when the national average was eleven per 100, counties are colored the darkest shade of red only if they had nearly double the national average (twenty-one or more), and the palest hue if the number was one per 100 (only 9 percent of the norm) or fewer. In the map for 2000, when the national average had risen to twenty-four, the darkest graduation represents less than 150 percent of the national average (thirty-four or more per 100), and the lightest represents counties that have 58 percent of the average (fourteen or fewer). Not surprisingly, the first map has a nearly uniform healthy tan, while the second

seems to show a draining of the nation's lifeblood to a few tiny spots.

When it comes to misleading readers, a single graphic can do the work of a thousand words.

Susan Williams

Professor of Mathematics

University of South Alabama

Mobile, Ala.

The editors reply:

Richard Florida wrote the article "Where the Brains Are," but our staff designed the graphics for the piece. One of the key concepts in the article is the importance of the density of highly skilled people within a geographic region to that region's economic growth. The more well-educated people, and the tighter they are packed, the faster a region grows. What's more, the returns on density do not appear to be constant; they seem to be increasing—that is, each skilled worker adds more to a region's overall growth potential than the last.

This means that showing the difference between cities as a constant proportion, as Susan Williams suggests—saying one city has twice as many graduates as another, for instance, without comparing the absolute density of graduates in each place—would mislead the reader as to the economic gaps between different cities and regions over time. For instance, if one city has five college graduates per 100 residents, and another has ten, the character and growth prospects of the two places are likely to be broadly similar. But two cities with twenty and forty graduates per 100 residents respectively are likely to be fundamentally different places. The percentage gap is the same in both cases—but it's the absolute gap that matters.

In any case, let us allay any doubts about whether college graduates are indeed flocking to a select number of cities: they are, disproportionately and incontrovertibly, no matter how one chooses to parse the data.

Running to the Center

Juliet Eilperin's excellent "Running for Their Lives" (November *Atlantic*) vividly describes the growing "hyper-partisanship" of American politics. But in addition to legislative redistricting reform—whose effects wouldn't be felt until after the next census—America's fifty states should enact a far more

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"Living Room." Park Güell, Barcelona.
Image courtesy of the human network.

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innovative reform: they should abolish the partisan political primary.

Instead, states should give every voter in every district an identical primary ballot, regardless of the voter's party registration—or lack thereof. No party would be guaranteed a nominee in November. But every candidate—including minor-party candidates, or outright independents—could compete, from the beginning, for all voters. The top two vote getters would then advance to the November general election—again, regardless of their party affiliations.

Partisan elections aren't mandated by federal law or the U.S. Constitution. And since the U.S. Supreme Court has declared state political parties "private organizations," why should all taxpayers continue to finance these members-only nominating contests? Especially when they're so poorly attended: primary-election turnout during the 2006 cycle has hovered between 10 percent and 25 percent of registered voters in most states.

Party leaders and extremists, of course, would hate an open primary. It would dilute their disproportionate influence, by which the politics of the passionate periphery frame the policy agenda, and the vicious tactics of personal destruction increasingly dominate both our campaigns and governing chambers. For most voters, though, politics is broken—and it's time to change the rules.

*Phil Keisling
Beaverton, Ore.*

Religion on Trial

In "Prophetic Justice" (October *Atlantic*), Amy Waldman describes the intrusion of Islam into recent court trials and concludes that "such a thorough judicial disquisition of a religion has no modern parallel in America." She is incorrect. Substitute *Wicca* for *Islam* and you have a description of what the Neopagan Witchcraft community of the United States has been going through for decades. From the infamous murder case of the "West Memphis Three" to innumerable child-custody disputes going on all over the country, Wiccan beliefs are put on trial almost every day.

Jurors know little about Wicca and cannot distinguish between the accurate testimony of a defense expert who is dismissed by the prosecution for being a practitioner and the biased testimony of a prosecution "expert" who is a born-again Christian with an anti-Wiccan agenda.

The backlash against the American Muslim community since 9/11 has drawn America's attention to just how unfairly we can treat a religious minority. America's Wiccans, victimized and persecuted for decades in the land of "freedom of religion," are wondering why it has taken the public so long to notice this.

*Donald H. Frew
Berkeley, Calif.*

How Bad Is Bush?

Jonathan Rauch is right that it will take time to fix the horrendous mistakes of George W. Bush ("Unwinding Bush," October *Atlantic*). But some of his statements seem open to serious challenge. For example, he writes that Ronald Reagan "rebuilt U.S. strength." Isn't the contrary true? Reagan gave us increased deficits and national debt, greater domestic income inequality, and a shift of the relative tax burden from the very rich to the middle and working classes.

Rauch writes that "Carter's weak leadership drained American confidence and prestige." Yes, the Iranian hostage crisis cost Jimmy Carter a second term, but to accuse him of "weak leadership" does him an injustice. Carter gave us strong environmental legislation; deregulation of the trucking, airline, rail, finance, communications, and oil industries; the Camp David accords; the Panama Canal treaties; full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China; and the negotiation of the SALT II treaty.

Rauch also suggests that "the [Iraq] gamble might still pay off." What has he observed that the rest of us have not? By all accounts Iraq is a quagmire, one into which we are falling deeper by the day. If it is a "gamble," the odds of success are virtually nil.

Finally, Rauch estimates that the unwinding of Bush will take "more than a decade, but less than two." Given the damage that Bush continues to wreak

on international institutions that took half a century to put in place, and rule-of-law principles that took centuries to evolve, I think that even five decades is a conservative estimate.

*L. Michael Hager
Washington, D.C.*

An Army of Everyone

In the excerpts from the Aspen Ideas Festival (October *Atlantic*), the historian David M. Kennedy is quoted as follows: "Another asymmetry of very troubling proportions, it seems to me, is [in] the nature of today's armed forces; 42 percent of today's Army enlistees are ethnic or racial minorities—42 percent."

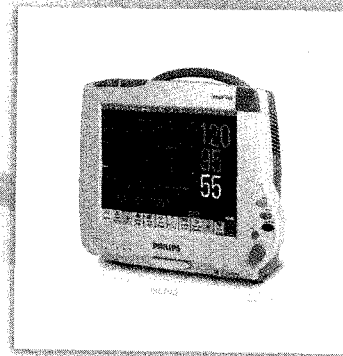
Kennedy should be aware that the census shows that among U.S. residents under age forty, nonwhites are approximately 40 percent of the population. Since most members of the military are under forty, the "nature of today's armed forces" does reflect the population at large, rather than a disproportionate number of "minorities."

*Mike Burns
Bakersfield, Calif.*

Advice and Consent

I realize that Ryan Lizza's profile of Barack Obama ("The Natural," November 2004 *Atlantic*) was first published in 2004, and republished recently only on your Web site, but I write for the sake of historical accuracy in your publication. I join Lizza in celebrating our senator, but your author should not have attempted to diminish my Senate election as a "fluke" without checking the actual voter numbers. I won a primary election against an incumbent senator. In the general election, I won more votes in Illinois than did Bill Clinton, with 2,631,229 votes to the president's 2,453,350. "Bill Clinton's coattails" is therefore not an accurate description of my victory in that election. I remain the first woman and the first African American elected statewide by the people of Illinois, and the only woman of color to have ever served in the U.S. Senate.

*Carol Moseley Braun
Former U.S. Senator
Chicago, Ill.*



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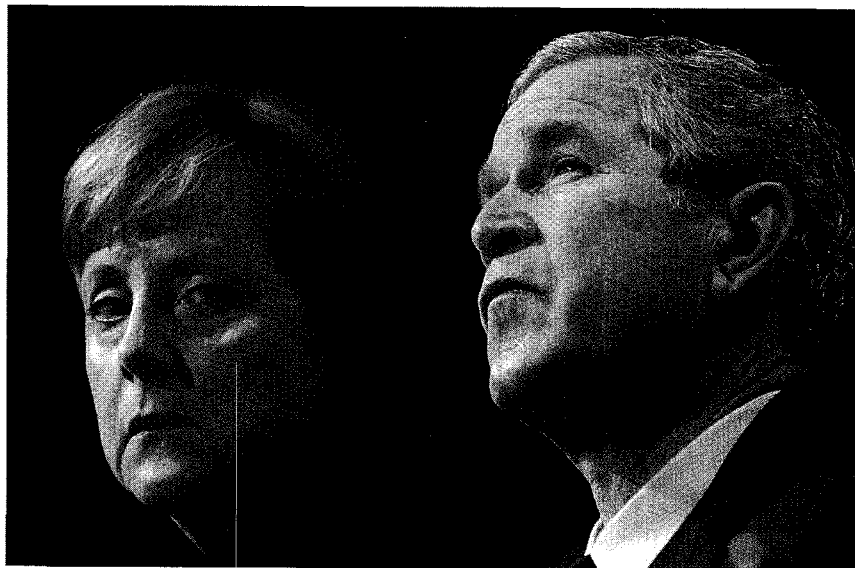
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COMMENT

Coalition of the Waiting

The U.S.-European alliance is not on its last legs—and when Bush goes, it could emerge stronger than ever

BY JONATHAN RAUCH

Over coffee not long ago, a European diplomat, then completing his five-year tour in Washington, reflected on anti-Americanism. No, he said, it is nothing new. The European left, in particular, has indulged in it for years. But today? Today, he sighed, is different. Since the Iraq War, mistrust of America has penetrated further into the mainstream. It has found lodging with the man in the street.

Polls bear him out. "America's global image has again slipped," began the summary of a fifteen-nation survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, in June. September brought more of the same, this time from the German Marshall Fund of the United States, whose Transatlantic Trends poll surveyed the United States and twelve European countries. The proportion of Europeans "who view U.S. leadership in world

affairs as desirable has reversed since 2002," reported the survey, "from 64 percent positive to 37 percent this year, and from 31 percent negative to 57 percent." What about Europe's views of President Bush? Don't ask. Well, all right: for the morbidly curious, his approval rating in Europe is a bottom-scraping 18 percent.

Yet here is something odd. Such overwhelmingly anti-U.S. sentiment, one might think, should translate into anti-U.S. politics. But it has not. A new generation of European leaders is moving into position, and it is surprisingly pro-American. Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany, has gone out of her way to restore transatlantic ties and to call for a strong United States-Europe partnership. From an American point of view, she is a big improvement over her predecessor, Gerhard Schröder.

REUTERS/JASON REED

Tony Blair, the exiting British prime minister, is as solidly pro-American as they come, to the point of being ridiculed as an American lackey. Gordon Brown, Blair's longtime heir apparent, was under pressure to distinguish himself from "Bush's poodle" as he pitched his leadership to the Labour Party in September. Yet he pointedly staked Labour's renewal "on that essential truth—the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism, never anti-Americanism." The glamorously next-gen leader of the British Conservative Party, David Cameron, gave a big foreign-policy speech declaring anti-Americanism "an intellectual and moral surrender," and pronouncing himself and his party "instinctive friends of America and passionate supporters of the Atlantic alliance."

No European leader has been a sharper thorn in the Bush administration's side than France's president, Jacques Chirac, and no country's chattering class has spoken as openly of making Europe a counterbalance to American influence. Yet Nicolas Sarkozy, Chirac's interior minister and the man whom many consider most likely to succeed him, chose, as *The Washington Post* put it, to "kick off the campaign season in France by making a U.S. tour," and by delivering, in Washington, an "unabashedly pro-American speech." He called America "Europe's obvious and natural partner," described the transatlantic bond as "unique and irreplaceable," and in case anyone missed the point, added, "My dedication to our relationship with America is well-known and has earned me substantial criticism in France." Not enough criticism, apparently, to make him sing an anti-American tune.

European voters presumably choose leaders for much more than their posture toward the United States. At the very least, however, it seems clear that "Atlanticism," as foreign-policy experts often call the idea of a robust U.S.-European partnership, is no kiss of death in European politics, and may indeed be a plus. Certainly some very prominent and savvy politicians are betting on it.

The polls point one way, the politics another. Why? The German Marshall Fund's survey suggested an answer. In

foreign policy, popularity (or lack of it, in America's case) does not, by itself, determine polarity. Interest trumps it. And, to a surprising extent, the broad publics of America and Europe view their interests the same way.

Both publics share an overwhelming consensus that international terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran, and "violence and instability in Iraq" are important threats. Europe is a degree less alarmed about security than the United States, but the two publics share the same general worries and priorities. Both publics believe the European Union should "exert strong leadership in world affairs." Both believe NATO is essential and view the United Nations favorably. Both agree that economic power is more important than military power. Both agree, overwhelmingly, that "when our country acts on a national security issue, it is critical that we do so together with our closest allies." (A surprise: Americans are more sold on multilateralism than are Europeans.)

Both publics, by almost five-to-one majorities, want to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons. They also share a marked reluctance to use military force to that end. But pluralities on both sides favor force if nonmilitary means fail to thwart Tehran's nuclear ambitions. In fact, Europeans are more hawkish on Iran than are American Democrats.

Those numbers suggest a strong U.S.-European affinity—perhaps, indeed, stronger than ever. What, then, gives rise to the unpopularity of America in Europe? Why is it that, as the German Marshall Fund poll finds, Americans want closer transatlantic ties and embrace European leadership, whereas Europeans want more independence from America and mistrust U.S. leadership?

One reason, of course, is the Iraq War, which caused a European crisis of confidence in America's leadership. Another reason is George W. Bush, whom Europeans have made up their minds to loathe. A more enduring difference is Europe's pacifist streak. Europeans and Americans agree that, as a practical matter, military force may eventually be needed to cope with Iran, but they disagree on whether, as a matter of principle, war is ever "necessary to obtain justice," with

Europeans taking the dovish side. Europeans' belief that there is no such thing as a good war will make them more reluctant than Americans to pull the trigger in a confrontation with, say, Iran.

Scrubbing the numbers suggests one more reason, perhaps the most intriguing: European opinion has much more in common with the views of U.S. Democrats and independents than with Republicans. For example, most Europeans, U.S. Democrats, and U.S. political independents oppose using military force to remove authoritarian regimes, but a majority of Republicans favor it. Substantial majorities of Europeans and U.S. Democrats and independents view the UN favorably, but Republicans take a dim view of it. In some respects, the wider divide is across the partisan aisle, not across the Atlantic Ocean.

Republican partisans ("Bush's base," in the political jargon) have single-handedly run the U.S. government for the past four years. For better or worse, one-party rule in America placed in charge the U.S. faction—a minority of the population, and at best a razor-thin majority of the electorate—that has no counterpart in Europe's political mainstream.

It may turn out, then, that Europe has soured on American leadership for many years to come. That would not paralyze the alliance (and has not), but it would raise the frictional costs of doing routine transatlantic business on everything from NATO to trade, and it would increase the odds of dangerous ruptures in times of confrontation with outside threats or adversaries: Iran, most obviously, but also, potentially, China, Russia, Hamas or Hezbollah, or even—heaven forbid—al-Qaeda itself.

But it is also possible that the elements of a renewed transatlantic alliance—centrist majorities, shared priorities, like-minded leaders—are already falling into place, waiting to be activated by a United States governed from the center of the country, rather than from the center of the Republican Party. To borrow Robert Kagan's evocative metaphor, Europe's left is from Venus and America's right is from Mars, but perhaps Earth is in sight. ▀

Jonathan Rauch is an Atlantic correspondent and a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution.



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Ordinary People

*A remarkable celebration of unremarkable lives
deflates pat social theories of both the right and the left*

BY CLIVE CROOK

In 1964 a documentary called *Seven Up!* first aired on British television. Simple in conception, it consisted of interviews with fourteen seven-year-old children. They were asked about their lives, their friends, their ambitions—and they were artfully chosen to represent different economic segments of English society.

The filmmakers had a thesis to advance, bound up with the British preoccupation with class and class-based predestination and expressed in the Jesuit maxim “Give me a child until he is seven, and I will give you the man,” words the narrator speaks at the start of the film. Here is the future of British society, he announces, already formed in these youngsters.

The film caused a stir in Britain when it was first broadcast, and it remains fascinating. The children are endlessly interesting, and so are the uncalculated, incidental glimpses one sees over their shoulders of the Britain of forty years ago. But *Seven Up!* turned out to be the beginning of a much larger—and altogether unique—undertaking. Every seven years since that first movie, the director Michael Apted (who was a researcher for the first program) has taken his cameras back to the same fourteen children and made a new documentary about them, each time splicing earlier interviews with newer material, and releasing in turn a series of self-contained films: *7 Plus Seven*, *21 Up*, *28 Up*, and so on. The newest installment, *49 Up*, is now being released on DVD (the earlier installments are all available on DVD).

The films are remarkable—without doubt the most interesting thing I ever expect to see on screen. Their cumulative effect is intellectually and emotionally overwhelming. I am a recent immigrant from Britain to the United States; I grew up, and into middle age,

with these films. (I am two years older than the subjects, and recognize segments of my own life’s trajectory in their stories.) Still, it surprised me to find that so few Americans appear to have seen them, or even to be aware of them. I highly recommend them to you.

We all tend to conceive of society in terms of strata of different kinds, defined by income or educational background, political affiliation or cultural affinity—the list is endless. Are you northern or southern, red state or blue state, urban or rural, straight or gay, soccer mom or metrosexual? Unavoidably, in thinking about politics, or public policy, one thinks about groups—whether it is right to advance the interests of this or that part of society, and at what cost to the interests of others. Then, in our own social lives, a quite separate realm, we deal not with types but with people—whether family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, acquaintances; those we love, those we like, those we detest—all of them individuals, set apart from their group identities. The *Up* films merge these planes of perception. You are forced to see a stratified society, as if from a great distance. But while you look you are also seeing and becoming attached to the fully formed individuals, aging before your eyes, who populate each layer. It is a deeply unsettling experience.

It isn’t so much that the films confirm or refute any particular theories of society—including the one that the filmmakers were first advancing in 1964. In many ways, it is true, the idea of social predestination is validated. There are qualifications and complications, of course, but social immobility emerges as a main finding of the series. (And while Americans might flatter themselves that it is otherwise on this side of the Atlantic, they are in fact no more mobile than the British—a subject for another time.)

Oddly, however, what mostly happens in the films is that this opening agenda just falls away, becoming curiously trivial. Viewers and filmmakers alike (Apted has made the observation in interviews) just lose interest in it. The subjects’ lives are so much richer and more compelling than any theories one might form about them.

The audience is constantly reminded of the fragility of its well-being, of its vulnerability to luck and circumstance. The most instantly appealing of the seven-year-olds is Neil. As a little boy, he talks with a chuckle, beaming away at the camera and telling the interviewer that he wants to be an astronaut, or if he cannot be an astronaut, a coach driver. You can drive people to the seaside, he laughs, and they give you a microphone so you can tell them where they are and all about it. In one shot that stays in the head, he is shown without voice-over just skipping down the street. At fourteen, all that joy is draining away. He seems to be struggling at school. The cares of the world are beginning to press down. At twenty-one, after dropping out of college—he had longed to go to Oxford but failed to get in, and three years later is still tortured by it—he is working as a casual laborer, living in a London squat, and showing signs of depressive illness. Poverty, homelessness, despair, and fears for his sanity come next; but then, in the latest two installments of the series, a recovery of sorts occurs, improbable and marvelous to see.

At seven, three of the boys are attending the same expensive prep school. They are shown in class singing “Waltzing Matilda” in Latin. Similar, privileged backgrounds, you see, and indeed the later films show that they all end up doing well professionally. A theory of social injustice—advantage passes from parent to child—is confirmed. And that is an important truth, to be sure. Yet one also sees that it is less than the whole truth. These die-cast children of the English upper class grow into completely different people, marked in different measure by satisfaction, disappointment, fatigue. Throughout the series, what make the deepest

impressions are not the constants, the conforming-to-theory similarities, but the untidy, subtly shifting differences.

All of the stories are captivating—and this is striking in itself, since most of these lives, briefly described, would seem pretty dull. Four of the characters drop out or appear only intermittently during the series, but the others are always there. Everybody who consents to take part is interviewed each time. In other words, there has been no attempt to select, or to dwell especially heavily on, the most interesting lives.

Tony, a lovable East End ruffian, wants at age seven to be a jockey; he tries and fails, and later becomes a London cabbie and part-time television actor (usually playing a London cabbie). Suzy, the sad young daughter of wealthy landowning parents, is lonely and withdrawn at fourteen, depressed and chain-smoking at twenty-one; but she later finds happiness in marriage and motherhood, and in helping others cope with grief. Three daughters of working-class families, Jackie, Lynn, and Sue, first interviewed together as giggling schoolmates, all have to contend, in different ways, with subsequent successes and setbacks. In differing degrees, the lives of these three are a struggle, but each has its own full measure of love and friendship and happiness. They are proud individuals, demanding (more so, as the series progresses) to be understood as such. The point is, these are not the most interesting stories of all the ones the filmmakers could have told. The films tell all the stories, and every one is captivating.

Stereotypes—which are artifacts, perhaps, of especially bad theories—are constantly undermined. Simon, living in a children's home at seven, is by twenty-eight an unskilled worker with limited prospects and five children. His marriage later breaks down, and in due course he appears with a new wife, child, and stepchild. Reading the bare facts, one might regard Simon as a feckless and irresponsible man, casually inflicting the fatherless childhood he experienced as a boy on his own children—or, alternatively, as the helpless victim of circumstance, failing as a father because

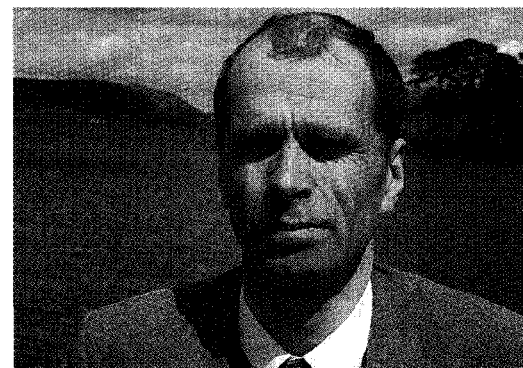
Neil at fourteen, twenty-one, thirty-five, and forty-nine

that was bound to be his fate. Watching the films, you see that neither is true. Simon had a difficult childhood: aside from the broken home, he is of mixed race, and was sometimes made to feel an outsider by blacks and whites alike. But he made bad choices as well, as he admits ("I was a lazy sod when I was younger"). He could have done better, had he chosen to, and he knows it. He makes no excuses. He is impossible to dislike, and irreducible to an example of something. Getting to know him stifles any instinct to condemn or condescend.

"Give me a child at seven, and I will give you the man." Does privilege early in life make it easier to prosper as an adult? Yes. Do early setbacks spoil your chances? Of course they do. The children of rich parents tend to be rich; the children of poor parents do much less well. One cannot watch these films without wanting to lean hard against the unfairness of this world. Yet one sees, also, that satisfaction in life is not the same thing as material success. Though one emerges disinclined to mold these lives to theories, one comes away suspecting that happiness, contentment, and self-respect are character traits as much as they are fruits of success. Money matters, obviously, but so do whether you are crushed by disappointment or spurred by it, sociable or solitary, restless or settled, capable or incapable of intimacy, deserving or undeserving of trust. And loneliness, maybe, is worse than poverty.

Ideally, have lots of money and a large capacity for happiness. But if you had to choose just one, these films suggest which it should be. ▀

Clive Crook is an Atlantic senior editor.



Containment Strategy

Iran. North Korea. Uganda? Why the Pentagon ranks Africa's AIDS crisis as a leading security threat

BY STEPHAN FARIS

In a dark-green shipping container outside a Ugandan military hospital, a visiting Tanzanian general and four of his colonels encircle a desk. On the desk sits a green plastic paper tray. And from the tray rises a polished wooden dildo. "This weapon," a Ugandan warrant officer tells them, "I'm sorry for exposing it to you. This is one of the weapons we have used in fighting HIV and AIDS."

In the Ugandan military's program for AIDS prevention and treatment, the dildo is used to demonstrate condom use. It is part of the first line of defense in a larger conflict that very much involves American forces: the fight to prevent countries from collapsing into failed states that can foment armed conflict, chaos, and terrorism beyond their borders. In fact, the United States Department of Defense funds a good part of the Ugandan military's AIDS program. It trains doctors and clinicians, helps support AIDS orphans, and stocks labs with instruments and supplies. And it has donated thirteen prefabricated HIV-testing labs and AIDS-counseling centers, including the one in which the officers were sitting on a summer afternoon out at the Bombo Barracks, about an hour's drive from Kampala.

The impact of AIDS on Africa's health and well-being is a matter of grim statistical record. By 2010, USAID estimates, the epidemic will have cut the life expectancy in Botswana to twenty-seven years from what would have been at least seventy years. Some countries expect to lose half a generation. "When you have countries where you have 40 percent of the adult population affected, where teachers are disproportionately infected, where we're creating a generation of orphans, you can see the stress on the social fabric," says Ambassador Mark R. Dybul, the U.S. global AIDS coordinator.

But what was once seen as a humanitarian catastrophe is viewed increasingly

as a security threat—an important reason behind the \$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that President Bush announced in January 2003. A study of 112 countries by Susan Peterson, a political scientist at the College of William and Mary, and Stephen Shellman, a political scientist at the University of Georgia, found that countries with severe AIDS epidemics had correspondingly high levels of human-rights abuse and civil conflict. "Does AIDS make war or civil strife more likely?" asks Peterson. "The answer is yes."



Congolese soldiers administering an AIDS test

Even in countries that don't collapse, AIDS deaths can threaten security in the form of AIDS orphans, who are desperate, disenfranchised, vulnerable to radicalization, and projected to reach 25 million worldwide by 2010. "Where do you think the breeding ground for terrorism will be?" asks General Charles Wald, the former operational head of European Command, which also oversees U.S. military operations in most of Africa. At a recent conference, Wald listed the biggest threats to U.S. security. After terrorism and weapons of mass destruction came AIDS.

High on the list of the Pentagon's concerns about AIDS is its impact on African militaries; for many, it has become the biggest killer. Young, often far from home, and with cash in their pockets, soldiers who must live under fire cultivate a sense of invulnerability that can kill them when they come back to the barracks. The epidemic accounts for seven out of ten military deaths in South Africa and kills more Ugandan soldiers than any other cause, including a brutal twenty-year insurgency and two wars in Congo. AIDS deaths have reduced Malawi's forces by 40 percent. Mozambique can't train police officers fast enough to replace those dying of the disease. "As we fight the enemy, the HIV is also fighting us," John Amosa, a forty-five-year-old AIDS-afflicted Ugandan sergeant, told me. "We have two front lines."

Uganda kicked off the fight that became a model for AIDS prevention in

1986, after President Yoweri Museveni sent sixty of his top officers for training in Cuba, where eighteen tested positive for HIV. At a conference later that year, Fidel Castro took the Ugandan president aside. "He said, 'You've got a big problem on your hands,'" recalled Sam Kibende, a deputy director of Uganda's national AIDS research center. "That's when the president woke up and realized his fighting force was going to be decimated." With national infection rates leveling off somewhere between 6 and 7 percent after peaking at 15 percent in the

REP BONEY/PANOS PICTURES

early 1990s, the Ugandan army plans to hold every officer responsible for AIDS education. "Behavior change needs sustained fire," says Dr. Stephen Kusasira, who runs the Ugandan military's anti-AIDS efforts. "We want it to be a command problem. It should only become a medical situation when they are sick."

Unfortunately, AIDS hampers the ability of Uganda and other African nations to maintain not only their own security but also that of their neighbors. Asked to send troops to the troubled Darfur region of Sudan, South Africa couldn't field a complete battalion of uninfected troops; an estimated 17 to 23 percent of its military is HIV-positive, and tests in 2004 on two battalions found infection rates as high as 80 percent. "They had to kludge together units to get enough healthy troops to send," says Wald, who retired from his post at European Command in July. Because African Union members contribute 37 percent of all United Nations peacekeepers, the shortage of healthy manpower has rippled out through the world's hot spots

after two years, and to more than 15 percent after three years.

It's not hard to see why. During a short stay in the Congolese city of Goma last year, I was shown a dozen or so children allegedly fathered by soldiers from the UN mission, including two light-skinned boys whose fathers were said to be Moroccan. One visitor to Bunia, where the fighting is most brutal, said that she had seen women stripping in the headlights of vehicles of soldiers on night patrol. "The United Nations has helped me a lot," Bibishe, a twenty-five-year-old prostitute, told me. "They bought me the mattress I'm sleeping on. They bought me clothes." In the courtyard of her brothel waited a drunken South African sergeant. It was about ten o'clock in the morning.

Since its beginnings in 1981, AIDS has infected about 65 million people worldwide, and killed more than 25 million of them. Yet in parts of Africa, the first waves of death are just beginning. Andrew Price-Smith, a political scientist at Colorado College, cites Zimbabwe,

to Africa and Southeast Asia, stirrings of epidemics in Russia and India (which happens to be the third-biggest contributor of UN peacekeepers) are, given their size, strength, and strategic importance, more worrisome still.

As the U.S. military pivots to confront these risks, it's starting to have to think preventively. The Navy—whose Naval Health Research Center is a leader in military research on behavioral issues—oversees and funds prevention and treatment programs in sixty-seven countries. In Vietnam, U.S. forces teach AIDS prevention to the army they once fought. In Ukraine, they're setting up testing and counseling centers. In India, they're providing clinical training and lab support. "We can't just sit back and wait until the crisis is fully blown and treat every problem like it's the nail and we're the hammer," says Wald.

The spectacular rollout of antiretroviral medication may be stopping the gap across Africa, but treatment programs will remain hostage to donor funding and vulnerable to viral resistance to drugs. Future military missions may increasingly be like the AIDS-vaccine research project in western Kenya, where the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research helps care for 2.5 million civilians on the tea

"Does AIDS make war or civil strife more likely?" asks Susan Peterson, a political scientist at the College of William and Mary. "The answer is yes."

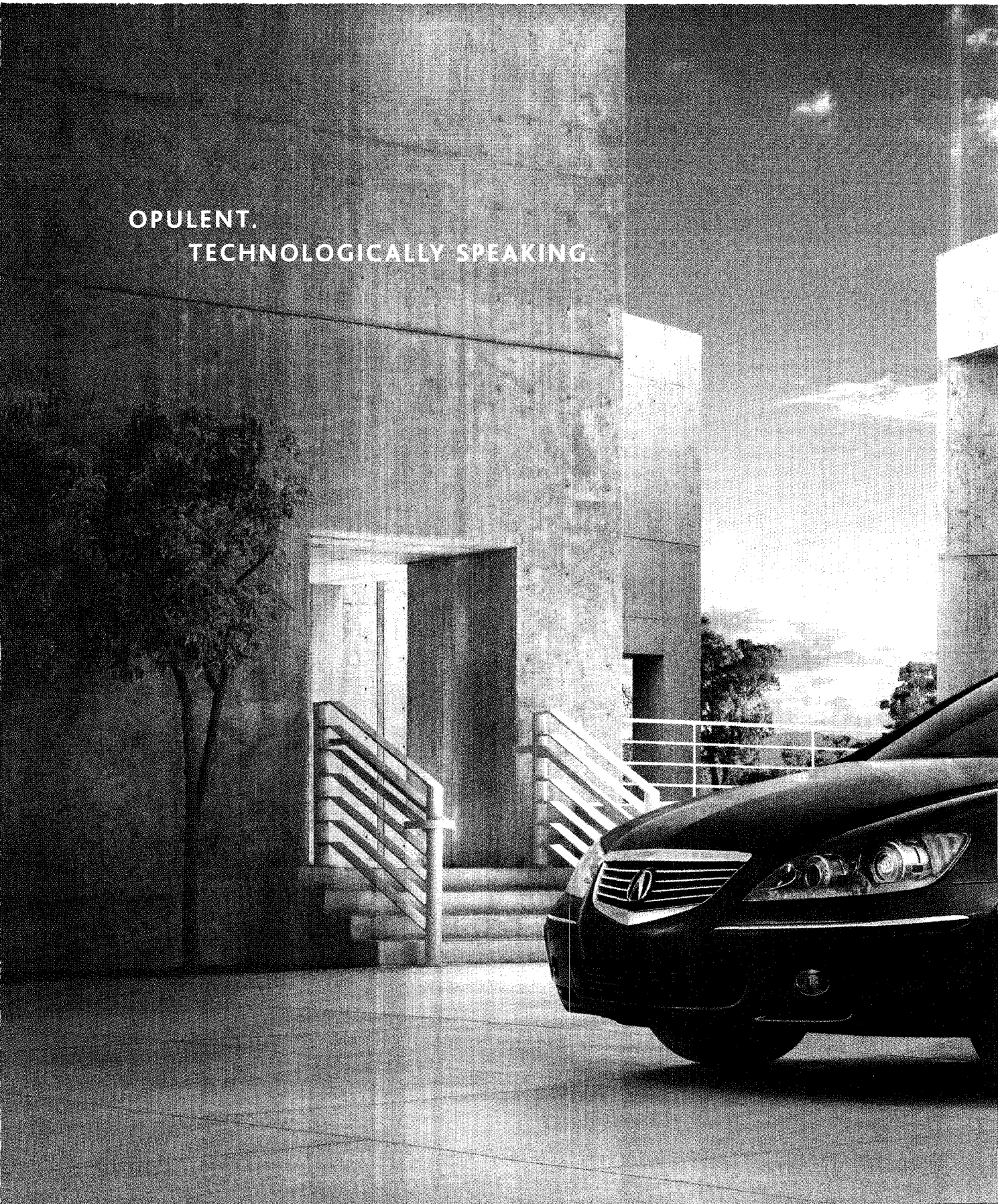
and is of growing concern to the United States, which leaves peacekeeping duties mostly to other nations. "AIDS is a readiness issue," says Richard Shaffer, a retired Navy commander who runs the Defense Department's HIV/AIDS Prevention Program. "It's not just having your weapon. It's not just knowing how to use it. It's being healthy enough to use it."

Perhaps the only thing worse than having few peacekeepers ready to send is the risk to those who actually go. Eighty-one percent of UN peacekeepers are on missions in Africa, home to 60 percent of the world's people living with AIDS. A 1999 study by the head of Nigeria's medical corps found that the longer Nigeria's soldiers were deployed as peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, the greater their chance of contracting HIV. Infection rates increased from 7 percent after one year abroad to 10 percent

where the epidemic accelerated a general slide into chaos, as a warning of what might happen in other countries. "We've already peaked in terms of infections," says Price-Smith. "Now we're starting to see the mortalities crest. The subsequent wave will be the wave of economic and political disruption that follows." Nigeria is another focus of concern, not so much because of its infection rate (which, at between 4 and 6 percent, is relatively low) but because of its general instability and its importance as an oil supplier. "When AIDS affects a large portion of a population, that creates instability," said General William "Kip" Ward, who took over Wald's position. "That instability can lead to conditions that are right for terrorist exploitation as they seek to recruit new followers." While the security threat that AIDS poses is for now largely confined

plantations around the city of Kericho and in the neighboring Southern Rift Valley. The Army provides 6,500 patients with antiretroviral drugs and supports a youth center along with church-based counseling and in-home care. It has renovated the district hospital and brought in more staff and doctors. To teach AIDS sufferers the basics of nutrition and feed them in the meantime, Walter Reed has even planted a model farm, complete with rows of maize and grazing areas for three cows and their calves. "The main mission is [vaccine] development for the American war fighter," says Colonel Samuel Martin, commander of Walter Reed in Kenya. "This just helps us put a more human dimension to our operations." In the leafy hills around Kericho, the Army is hoping to keep Americans safe by helping Africans to stay alive. ▀

Stephan Faris is a freelance journalist.



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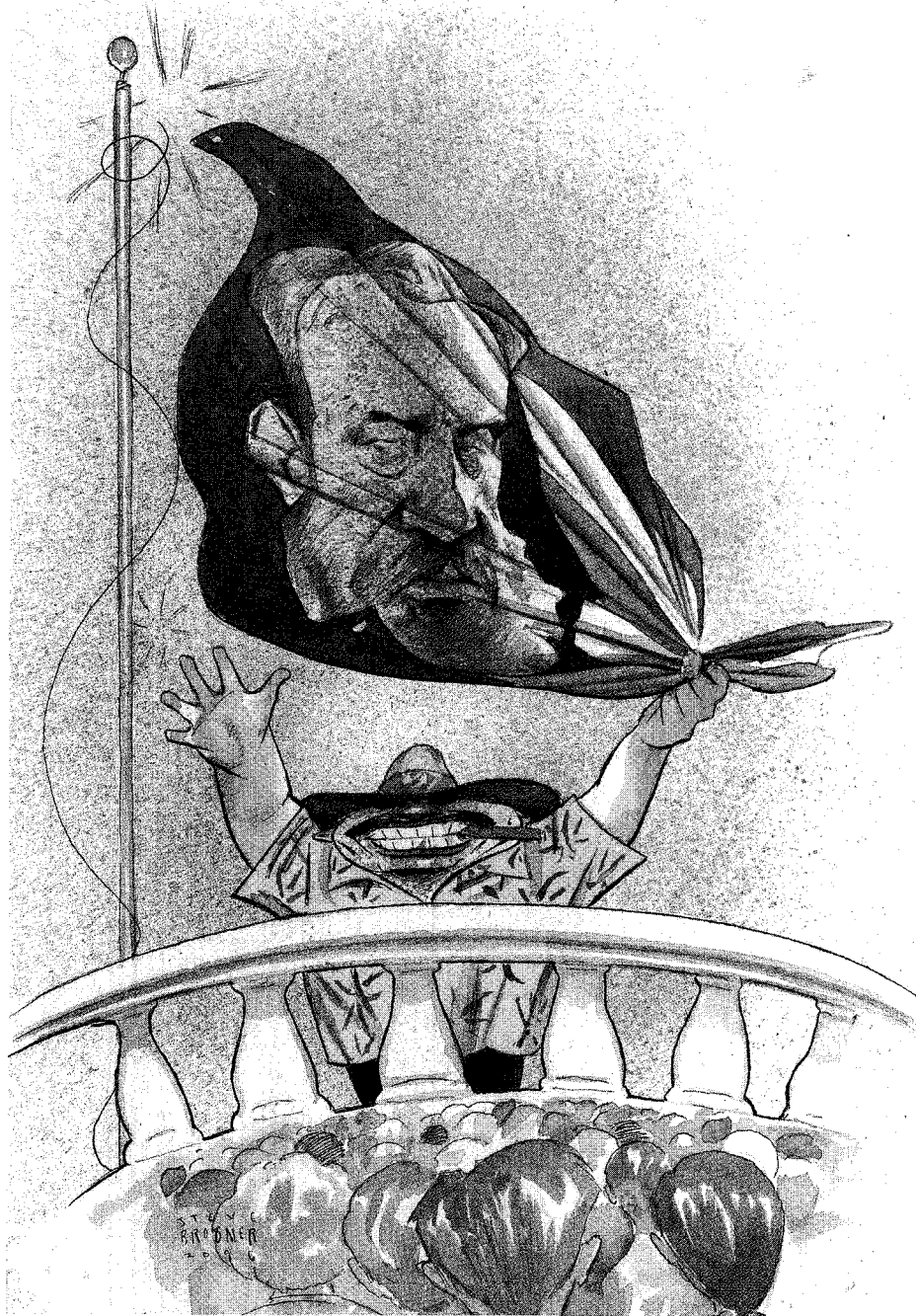
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THE FUTURE

Election Day 2008

A letter from Florida

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum, but the special election to be held here next Tuesday has many people wondering if the laws of physics and politics have been temporarily conjoined. On Election Day, Florida's Cuban Americans will go to the polls twice—once to vote for America's next president, and again to determine Cuba's.

The so-called *elección extraordinaria y democracia in absentia* is the brainchild

of Jorge Menos Canosa, a prosperous leader of the Cuban expatriate community in Miami and, like most of his countrymen who arrived in Florida after the revolution, a fierce opponent of the Castro regime. He gained prominence in 1971 when he flew a blimp festooned with anti-Castro slogans over a soccer game outside Havana. He barely eluded the Cuban MiG fighters that were scrambled to shoot him down.

As he told *The Miami Herald* last summer, the idea of holding Cuba's first democratic election—in the United States—came to him “between three and four in the morning” during a “very robust” night of celebrating following the death of Ramon Castro, Fidel's younger brother, who succeeded Fidel after his recent death.

“We were sitting around discussing what should happen, when it came to us—why leave it to them?” Canosa told a visitor recently, while sitting on the deck of his expansive home overlooking the Everglades, chewing on an unlit (Dominican) Montecristo cigar. “To be candid: What do they know at this point? They’ve been living in a totalitarian dictatorship since 1959,” he said. “Here in Florida, we have abundant experience with democracy. We know how to run elections. Okay, in 2000, a Democrat almost won. But,” he added, lighting the cigar, “as you saw, we took care of *that*.”

Canosa, whose name appears on the ballot, discounts personal ambition. “I’m eighty-one,” he said. “I’m wealthy. I’m not so eager to live in some *porquería*—roughly, *dump*—of a presidential ‘palace’ that hasn’t had new plumbing since the ‘50s. But maybe it’s time to give something back. Like my American grandchildren would say, *Whatever*. Anyway, I’m on the ballot. But there are other candidates to choose from.”

Seventeen other candidates, to be precise. According to the latest poll, the front-runner is Jaime Perfecto Jiménez, a billionaire duty-free entrepreneur, who has vowed if elected to personally execute all associates of Fidel and Ramon Castro. (“With my own pistol.”)

At the other end of the spectrum is Fulminacio García y López, who has pledged to increase the daily minimum wage in Cuba to \$1 a day, up from thirty cents. Doctors, engineers, and lawyers would get salary increases to \$5 a day, and a chicken on religious feast days.

Exactly how the winner might actually take office is unclear. Jiménez, who on weekends conducts military-style maneuvers with a brigade of like-minded compatriots in the Everglades, says he has an army “equipped and ready to assert my presidency.” Canosa, for his part, has already been arrested and prosecuted

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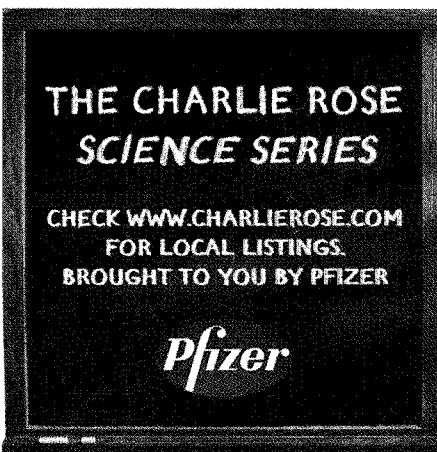
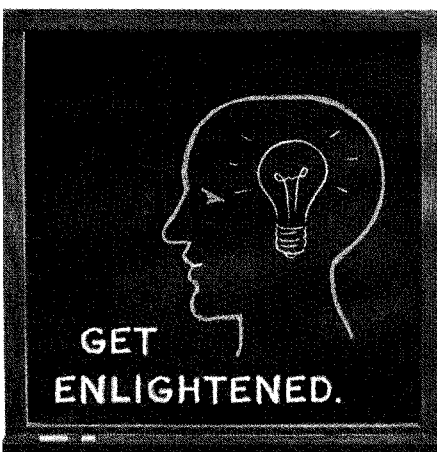
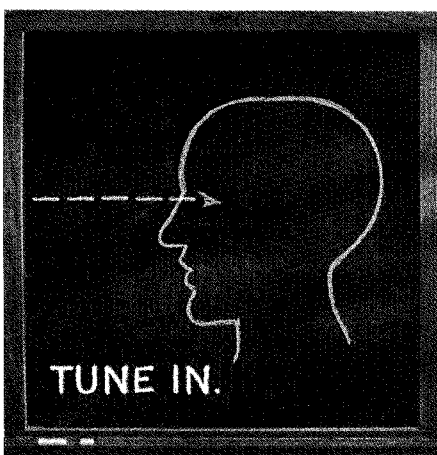
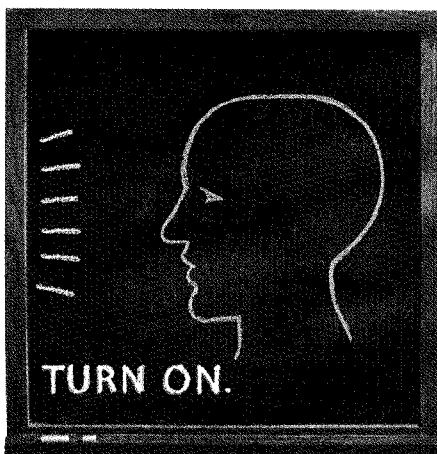
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several times for violating the Overthrow of Foreign Governments Act, but each time has been acquitted thanks to the aggressive tactics of his attorney, Roy Black, whose other clients have included William Kennedy Smith and Rush Limbaugh.

The present Cuban government, headed by Ramonito Castro y Castro, a grandson of Ramon, has been quite specific about what its reaction to a takeover bid would be: Castro y Castro has promised "apocalypse like never before." His ally, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, has threatened to drive supertankers loaded with oil onto Floridian reefs, "turning imperialist beaches black from Key West to Cape Cod—maybe even to Nova Scotia, depending on the Gulf Stream."

However it plays out, this election seems sure to change the political—and perhaps even demographic—contours of Florida. "In 1980, you had the Marielistas," says Ramon Castanetas, a columnist for *Cuba Libre*, the influential Spanish-language weekly, recalling the mass exodus of Cubans to the United States. "Perhaps in 2008 we'll have the Miamistas, going the other way, only in nicer boats."

More than 800,000 Cuban Americans live in Florida, and most are Republicans. If enough of them decide to return to Cuba, Florida will turn from a "red"—or *rojo*—state to a "blue"—or *azul*—state. With Florida's twenty-seven electoral votes at stake, this possibility has Republicans in Washington nervous, and Democrats watering at the mouth.

When Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton was asked how she would respond, as president, if millions of Cuban Americans began to cross the Gulf Stream south, she said that she was "all in favor of more democracy for Cuba, as long as Dubai isn't allowed to operate ports there." Republican nominee Jeb Bush, meanwhile, denied Republican anxiety about a Floridian political Doppler shift from red to blue, declaring that most Cuban Americans would want to stay put once he, as president, enacted his plan to raise federal revenues by cutting income tax rates to zero percent.

In truth, the long-term impact of this extraordinary event on the Cuban

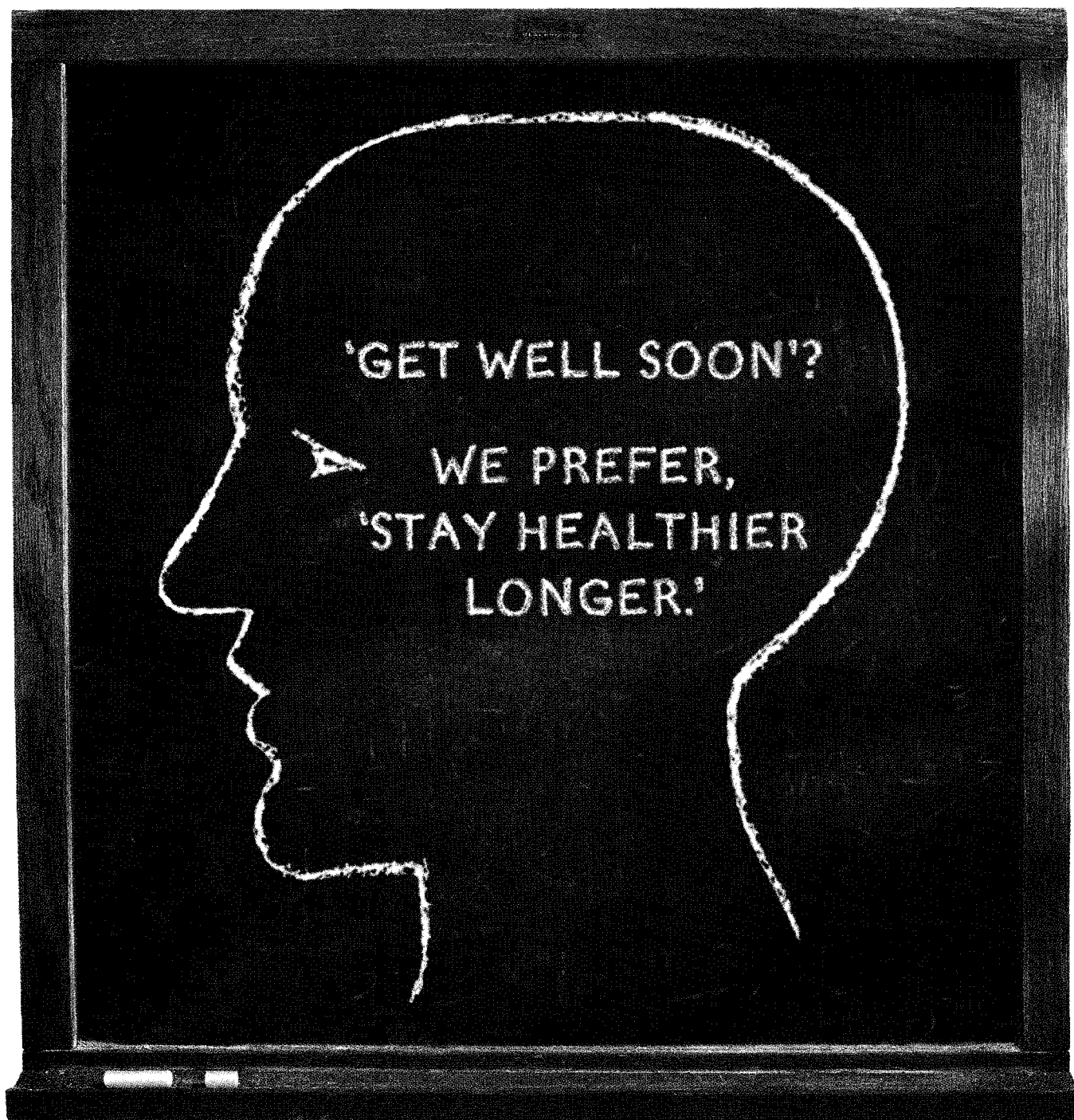
American psyche is impossible to predict with any confidence. For the past fifty years, the Cuban expatriate community has had a bona fide devil (*diablo*) in Fidel Castro. Their hatred for Castro and Communism has been a dynamo of energy and, to mix metaphors, the glue that has bonded them together tightly over the years. Now that the devil is gone, whither will their hatred be directed; or, will their hatred simply wither?

Sociologists who have studied the hatred patterns within the Cuban community in the United States are of two minds; even three. Sonesta-Maria Osorio, a professor of animosity at Opa-Locka Community College, says, "To paraphrase Voltaire on religion, if Castro did not exist, the Cubans would have to invent him." She speaks of a "duality [*dualidad*] within the Cuban soul. On the one hand, the placid, joyful temperament—the lover and enjoyer of life, of music and dancing, cigars, women, good food: the easy-goer. Then on the other hand, you have the quick-to-reach-for-the-machine-gun-or-machete-or-Russian-missile: the not-so-easy-goer. This is the Cuban in his totality and complexity. And truthfully, it can be very scary."

Other social observers of the Cuban experience foresee, as one puts it, "a period of intense introspection, followed by a period of spectacular turmoil—lots of explosions, a new Baghdad—followed by a period of exhaustion and more introspection, followed by a period of heavy drinking, followed by a tremendous hangover."

Looking out over the Everglades from his deck, producing a second cigar, Jorge Menos Canosa is philosophical. "I suppose it would be something to win," he says. "To return to Havana after all these years, to stand on the balcony in the palace and address all the people in the square and say, 'So, *muchachos*, *muchachas*, what was all *that* about?' To hear the roar of the crowd. It wouldn't be so bad after all. On the other hand," he says, sipping a Bacardi and Coke, "it's not so bad right here, even with the mosquitoes and the alligators and the Democrats." ▀

Christopher Buckley's new novel, Boomsday, will be published by Warner Twelve in the spring. He is the editor of ForbesLife magazine.



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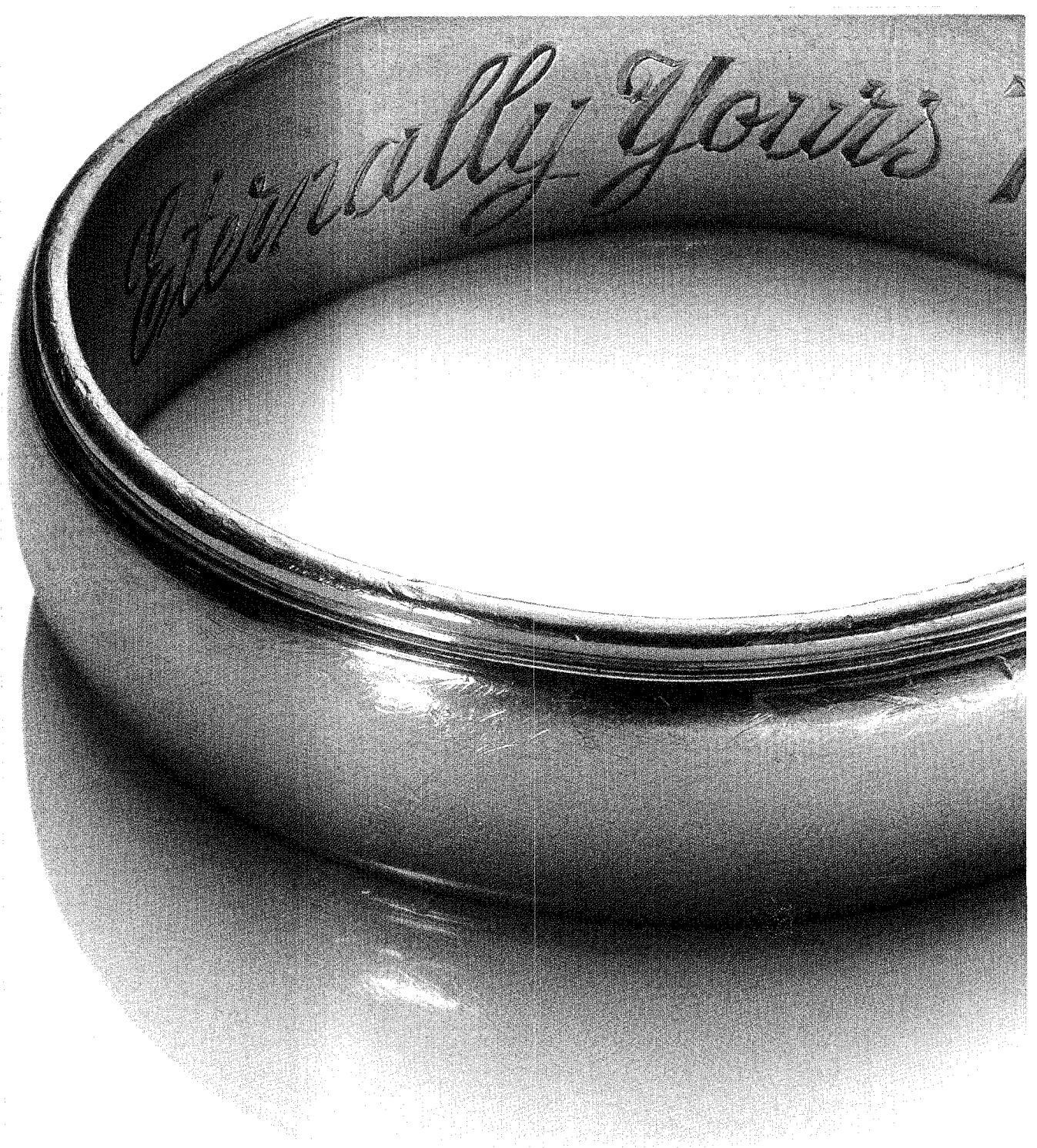
such as diabetes workshops and other group health classes. And the results are clear. These programs are helping keep people healthy and reducing the economic burden of disease, in some cases decreasing hospital stays by as much as 52%.

Today, Pfizer is working toward solutions that mean a happier, healthier tomorrow for us all.



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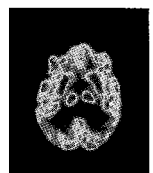
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What will we remember after Alzheimer's is long forgotten?

Imagine Alzheimer's itself has become a hazy memory. GE is working to develop visionary solutions that could help predict and track the progression of the disease today, so one day it might be eliminated altogether. The future's promise has never been clearer. When you re-imagine healthcare, you re-ignite hope.



To learn more, visit ge.com/healthcare.



imagination at work



POLL

PAKISTAN: ALLY OR ADVERSARY?

The Atlantic recently asked a group of foreign-policy authorities about Pakistan and its president, Pervez Musharraf

Q: How should Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf be viewed by the United States?

68% AS A PARTNER WHO IS NOT ALWAYS HELPFUL, BUT IS AT LEAST AS GOOD AS THE LIKELY ALTERNATIVES

"Musharraf faces domestic pressures and threats from many sources, including Islamist extremists and a security apparatus often sympathetic to their cause. He is walking a tightrope—trying to cooperate with the United States in fighting terrorism without undermining the stability of his government."

"Musharraf is deeply flawed, but Thomas Jefferson is unlikely to be his successor."

"He's better than many of the alternatives, but unless we push him to take steps to open up the political process, our alternatives will get worse and worse."

23% AS UNWILLING TO CRACK DOWN ON MILITANTS; A LEADER IN NEED OF STEPPED-UP PRESSURE BY THE UNITED STATES

"Pakistan has already made the world a distinctly less safe place thanks to [nuclear scientist] A. Q. Khan—who has suffered no penalty [for passing secrets to other countries]. Just as bad, Pakistan has mostly allowed al-Qaeda to continue to operate with impunity ... along the Afghani border. In sum, the main reasons why we have failed to kill or capture the world's public enemies No. 1 and No. 2—[Osama] bin Laden and [Ayman] al-Zawahiri—is because of lack of Pakistani cooperation. And the main reason that the nuclear non-proliferation regime is in so parlous a condition today is because of Pakistan."

"Musharraf is casting himself as the only man able to hold off the Islamist hordes, but in fact he's cut a deal with the Islamists. He's no Atatürk; under his reign the power of Islamists is growing."

9% AS AN ACTIVE AND INDISPENSABLE ALLY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORIST GROUPS

"Musharraf is not perfect, but when you consider what a difficult balancing act he has to manage ... it's astonishing how much he has delivered for the United States. We could not have disrupted al-Qaeda as successfully as we have without his cooperation, and A. Q. Khan would still be selling turnkey nuclear facilities if Musharraf had not shut him down ... Compared to other partners, Musharraf has stepped up, even though the United States has a history of walking away from Pakistan [after getting] what it wants—a history that is always in the Pakistani mind."

Q: What type of government is most likely to eventually replace Musharraf's?

63% MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

"A military dictatorship, but [one that] could be far more tolerant of jihadists."

"The military is too deeply entrenched to be replaced by a civilian Islamist group. What is dangerous is the fact that so many of the military are Islamists themselves, and have had little if any association with the United States or the West."

"A [military] government that listens even less to the U.S. on the issue of [counterterrorism] in Pakistan. This will make the region far more dangerous, not because of terrorism per se, but because the Indians may decide that they cannot continue to live with a Pakistan that supports terrorism inside India."

22% DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

"What follows Musharraf will look like a democracy, but will exist at the pleasure of the military and within [the] constraints it develops."

"[It will be a] democracy with significant Islamist representation."

15% ISLAMIST THEOCRACY

"[Since the government has] provided little for the people, the people will opt for the promise of salvation provided by the Islamists. The military may try to repress such extremism, but it is more likely to join it."

PARTICIPANTS (41): Kenneth Adelman, Ronald Asmus, Samuel Berger, Daniel Blumenthal, Max Boot, Stephen Bosworth, Daniel Byman, Warren Christopher, Richard Clarke, Eliot Cohen, William Cohen, Ivo Daalder, James Dobbins, Jay Garner, Leslie Gelb, Marc Grossman, John Hamre, Gary Hart, Bruce Hoffman, John Hulsman, Robert Hunter, Tony Judt, Robert Kagan, David Kay, Andrew Krepinevich, Charles Kupchan, John Lehman, James Lindsay, Edward Luttwak, Jessica Mathews, John McLaughlin, William Nash, Joseph Nye, Carlos Pascual, Thomas Pickering, Kenneth Pollack, Joseph Ralston, Susan Rice, Wendy Sherman, James Steinberg, Anthony Zinni.

Not all participants answered both questions.

THE NEWEST POWER COUPLE IN WASHINGTON

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Iran: A Minority Report

Mapping the rise of discontent

BY GRAEME WOOD

Iran's ethnic minorities are not at all happy with their Persian-dominated central government—not, at least, if you go by the number of riots incited, state buildings bombed, and Iranian soldiers slain over the past two years. Since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election as president in 2005, Iranian Turks have rioted in the northwest, Baluchis have kidnapped and beheaded government officials in the southeast, Arabs have blown up oil pipelines in the southwest, and Kurdish guerrillas have sniped continually at Iranian soldiers in the mountains bordering Iraq and Turkey.

Persians make up only a slim majority of Iran's population. The rest is composed of a handful of disparate minority groups, each of which has complained since the time of the shah about oppression by Tehran. Occasionally, individual groups have briefly taken up arms, only to calm down again for years or decades. But rarely have so many snapped back at the government so furiously over so short a time.

What's behind this rash of outbursts? Members of Iran's minority groups cite Ahmadinejad's Shia Persian chauvinism as a primary provocation, along with the government's abiding economic neglect. The leadership of the Islamic Republic, however, prefers to blame foreign powers, accusing the United States, Israel, Britain, and others of sowing discord to soften up Iran for a direct confrontation later. "They look at this as a first salvo in a war to end the regime and pressure Iran to give concessions in its nuclear negotiations with the West," says Mohsen M. Milani, an Iran expert at the University of South Florida.

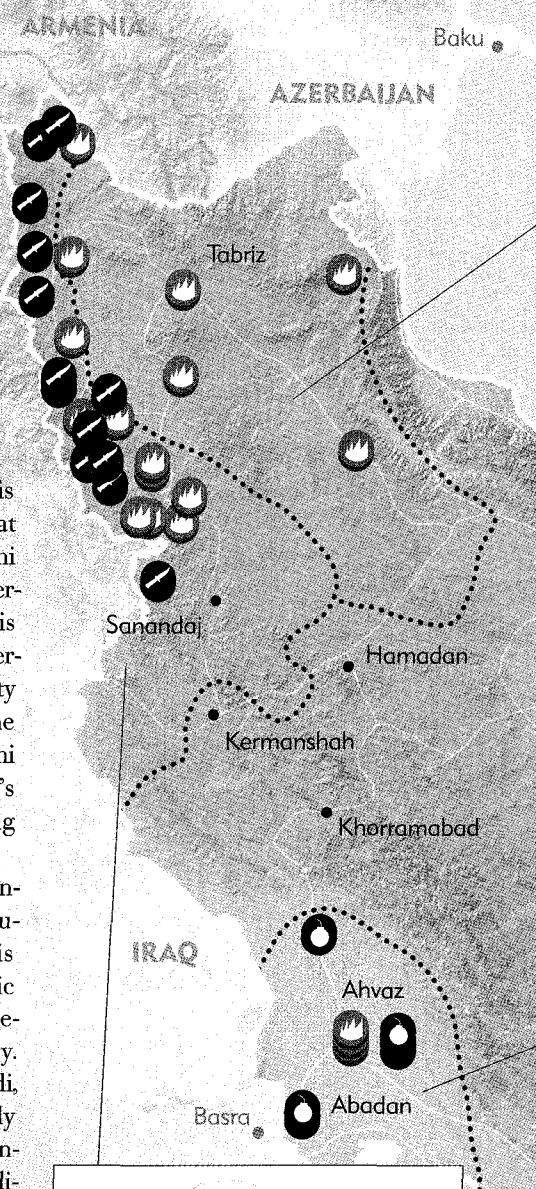
Iran has been fending off challenges to its territorial integrity for much of its modern history, and previous ethnic uprisings have been linked to foreign meddling. During the decades-long rivalry between Iran and Baathist Iraq, for instance, each nation sponsored

insurgencies against the other. One group of insurgent Iranian Baluchis openly kept an office in Baghdad.

Today, many of Iran's restive minorities continue to receive ideological and material support from their kin in neighboring states. Iraqi and Turkish Kurds, who are seeking autonomy in their own countries, cooperate closely with Iranian Kurdish insurgents. Pakistani and Saudi Salafis provide spiritual encouragement—at the very least—for Iran's Baluchi Sunni insurgents, and scorn Iran's Shia leadership. Tehran accuses irredentist Azeris from the neighboring Republic of Azerbaijan, an American ally that has frosty relations with Iran, of encouraging the riots that broke out in Iran's Azerbaijani territories in May. In each case, Iran's governing mullahs see the conspiring hands of local and distant powers.

Except for the Azeri Turks, who constitute about a quarter of Iran's population, none of the restive groups is big enough to bring down the Islamic Republic. But Iran's leaders are nonetheless treating the violence gravely. Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi Shahrudi, chief of the Iranian judiciary, recently announced the creation of special counterintelligence offices to deal with seditious minorities. Ahmadinejad, for his part, has undertaken a demanding travel schedule, visiting all parts of the country to try to win over the many groups unhappy with his presidency.

Tehran has produced no evidence that the United States (or, for that matter, Israel or Britain) actually supports Iranian ethnic insurgents, though a few groups, notably the Kurds and some Azeris, seek American backing. And the regime change desired by the White House is quite unlikely to come about as a result of minority unrest. But proxy wars can be useful for the more limited goals of warning, harassing, and distracting one's enemies, and they appear



KURDS (7%)

The most unruly of Iran's minorities, the Kurds have fought against Tehran since the 1960s. Like the Baluchis, they are largely Sunni, but they tend to be better educated and less religious. Kurdish paramilitary groups have been ambushing Iran's Revolutionary Guards in Iranian Kurdistan, killing dozens, then retreating to Iraqi Kurdistan, where they train and operate with near impunity.

to be in fashion in the Middle East today. Iran's minorities will be worth watching as the nation's nuclear stand-off with the West continues. ▀

Graeme Wood is an Atlantic staff editor.

AZERIS (24%–33%)

This is the group Tehran most fears. In May, after an Iranian newspaper published a cartoon featuring an Azeri-speaking cockroach, deadly riots broke out in Azerbaijan province. In general, however, the Azeris, who are Shiites, have been happier with the Islamic Republic than they were with the shah's government. Azeris are economically powerful and well represented—Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is of Azeri heritage.

INCIDENTS SINCE APRIL 2005



Riot



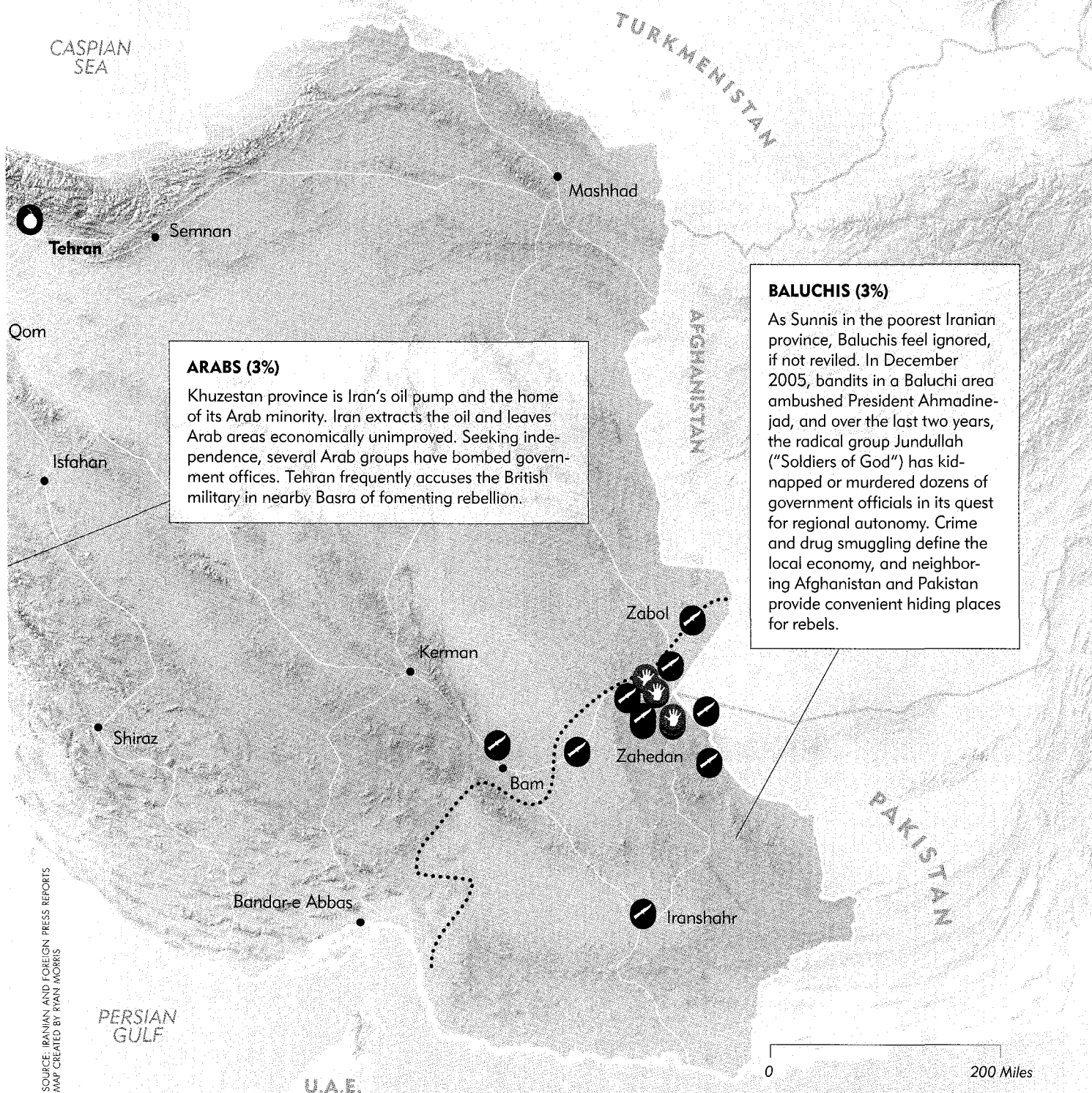
Ambush/
assassination



Bombing



Kidnapping



ARABS (3%)

Khuzestan province is Iran's oil pump and the home of its Arab minority. Iran extracts the oil and leaves Arab areas economically unimproved. Seeking independence, several Arab groups have bombed government offices. Tehran frequently accuses the British military in nearby Basra of fomenting rebellion.

BALUCHIS (3%)

As Sunnis in the poorest Iranian province, Baluchis feel ignored, if not reviled. In December 2005, bandits in a Baluchi area ambushed President Ahmadinejad, and over the last two years, the radical group Jundullah ("Soldiers of God") has kidnapped or murdered dozens of government officials in its quest for regional autonomy. Crime and drug smuggling define the local economy, and neighboring Afghanistan and Pakistan provide convenient hiding places for rebels.

Primary Sources

Afghan schools under attack; the perils of stock-tip spam; marriage as a matter of life and death; Vietnamese astrology gets it right

TERRORISM School's Out

One of the most ominous signs that the Taliban and warlords in Afghanistan are trying to return to power is the emergence of a terrorist campaign against the country's schools, according to a recent report by Human Rights Watch. In late 2005, attacks on teachers, schools, and aid workers sharply increased, and the trend has continued into this year. Schools have been rocketed and burned, teachers murdered (one by beheading), and bombs detonated in classrooms. "Night letters"—written threats ordering teachers and students to stop their work—have been posted at mosques and schools. (A late-2005 letter delivered a threat to "put acid on [the] faces" of girls attending school in Kandahar, prompting the local community to stop sending any

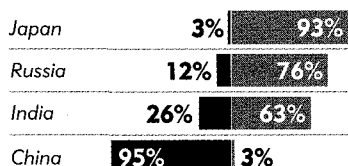
girls over the age of ten to school.) Since schools are, for many Afghans, the main point of contact with the government, the terrorism campaign against education has been particularly damaging. Attacks on schools and education aid workers have "stunted and, in some places, even stopped ... development and reconstruction work," a situation that is already beginning to turn people in the south and southeast (the least secure regions) away from the central government. Unless the government of Afghanistan and the U.S.-led coalition take steps to increase security and protect schools, the report states, the country faces a "crisis of insecurity," and another generation of Afghans will lose the chance for education and advancement.

—"Lessons in Terror: Attacks on Education in Afghanistan," Human Rights Watch

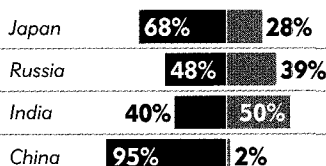
AS CHINA RISES, ASIA FRETS

Regional responses to China's emerging clout, spring 2006

How do you regard China's growing military power?



How do you regard China's growing economic power?



GEOPOLITICS

Asia's Bad-Neighbor Policy

A new Pew survey of Asian opinion finds a great deal of hostility among the publics of the continent's major powers. It's not just traditional rivals like the Pakistanis and the Indians who take a dim view of one another; half of all Japanese have a negative view of Pakistan, for instance, and a plurality of Chinese have an unfavorable view of India. Among the Japanese, the two Koreas are regarded with suspicion: 97 percent of Japanese have an "unfavorable" view of North Korea (for understandable reasons), but a sizable minority—43 percent—hold negative views of the democratic South as well. The good news, though, is that all of this hostility may not translate into real

geopolitical tension. Despite their mutual dislike, for instance, only a third of Japanese and Chinese call the other country an "adversary." And while China's neighbors express a great deal of worry about the nation's rising influence—large majorities in Russia, India, and Japan describe growing Chinese military strength as a "bad thing"—few in those Asian countries surveyed expect China to displace the United States as the dominant world power anytime soon. (Even in China itself, only 37 percent of those surveyed expected China to supplant America within fifty years.) And the United States itself is still regarded favorably by either majorities or pluralities in China, Japan, and India.

—"Publics of Asian Powers Hold Negative Views of One Another," Pew Research Center

DIPLOMACY

Gilded Plowshares

The occupants of the ten rotating seats on the United Nations Security Council may, in effect, be trading their votes for cash, argues an article in *The Journal of Political Economy*. When nations begin their two-year terms on the Security Council, the aid they receive directly from the UN jumps 8 percent. Once a country's term expires, aid immediately drops to pre-membership levels, leading the authors to reject the possibility that temporary members receive more aid because they have become more visible. During periods when the Security Council is very active (and when temporary members' votes are more valuable), annual aid for developing countries holding temporary seats rises 166 percent. The authors single out the United States as an especially likely vote buyer: rotating members receive 59 percent more U.S. foreign aid while on the council, and their gains in direct UN aid come primarily via UNICEF, an organization seen as a center of U.S. influence.

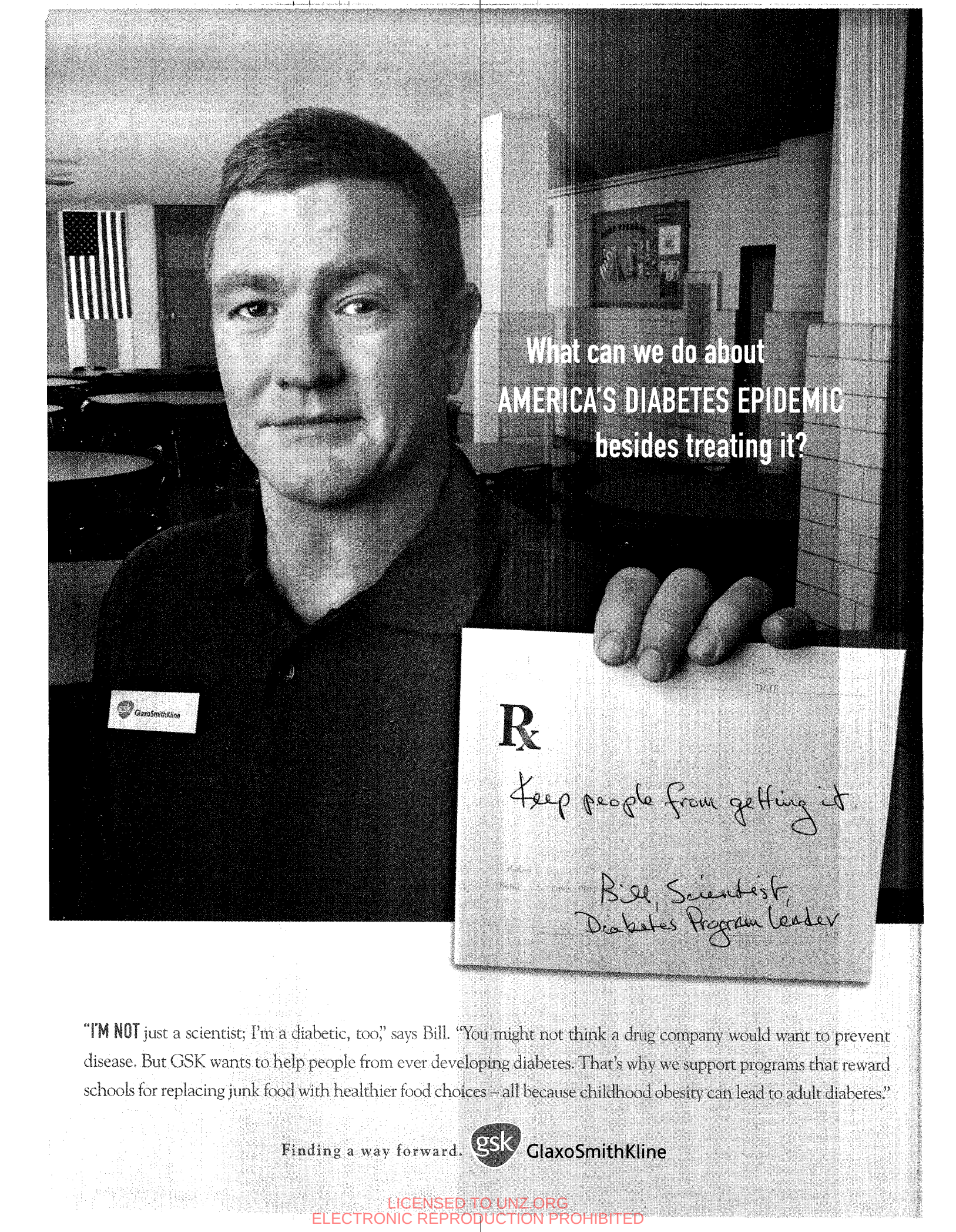
—"How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations," Ilyana Kuziemko and Eric Werker, *The Journal of Political Economy*

TECHNOLOGY

Spam-a-Lot

E-mail spammers endure legal harassment, exclusion from polite society, and the disgust of nearly every computer user. But a recent paper suggests why they persist: spamming is an easy way to part fools from their money. The paper examines the price fluctuations of stocks promoted in unsolicited "hot tips" e-mails sent during 2004 and 2005. On the day before the spam was sent, the touted stocks tended to get bought up (presumably by the spammers), and their prices rose. They rose again on the day of the spamming, as the gullible made their purchases, then plummeted, as the spammers sold high and left their marks clutching mediocre stocks. On average, a spammer could make a 4.9 percent profit in two days. The technique is probably legal, the authors write, as long as spammers disclose their interests in fine print (many do). Under securities law, if e-mail users are naive enough to take stock tips from strangers on the Internet, then their losses are their own damn fault.

—"Spam Works: Evidence From Stock Touts and Corresponding Market Activity," Laura L. Frieder (Purdue University) and Jonathan L. Zittrain (Harvard Law School)



What can we do about
AMERICA'S DIABETES EPIDEMIC
besides treating it?

Rx

Keep people from getting it.

Bill, Scientist,
Diabetes Program Leader

"I'M NOT just a scientist; I'm a diabetic, too," says Bill. "You might not think a drug company would want to prevent disease. But GSK wants to help people from ever developing diabetes. That's why we support programs that reward schools for replacing junk food with healthier food choices – all because childhood obesity can lead to adult diabetes."

Finding a way forward.  GlaxoSmithKline

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IMMIGRATION

Which Way to Wausau?

More than 2 million refugees have arrived in the United States since the Refugee Act of 1980 established the current procedure for seeking asylum, and a new Brookings Institution paper tracks the migrants' changing origins and destinations. In the early 1980s, the vast majority arrived from Southeast Asia, as part of a wave of migration that began during the Vietnam War. Since then, the largest waves have arrived from the former Soviet Union (cresting in 1992 and falling ever since) and the Balkans (mainly refugees from the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s); from 2000 to 2004, the largest spike has been in refugees from Africa. Meanwhile, though most new arrivals still settle in traditional gateway cities like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, refugees since the 1990s have also found their way in

YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE

Countries sending the most refugees to the United States, 1983–2004

Country	Total Refugees
1.  USSR (and former members thereof)	493,040
2.  Vietnam	387,741
3.  Yugoslavia (and former members thereof)	168,644
4.  Laos	113,504
5.  Cambodia	71,433
6.  Iran	61,349
7.  Cuba	51,787
8.  Somalia	47,753
9.  Iraq	35,252
10.  Ethiopia	35,144

increasing numbers to cities like Seattle, Atlanta, and Portland, Oregon. And specific cities have become associated with specific refugee populations—Detroit with Iraqis, for instance, and Los Angeles with Iranians, but also less familiar

destinations like Wausau, Wisconsin, which is home to a large Hmong population, originally from Laos.

—“From ‘There’ to ‘Here’: Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America,” Audrey Singer and Jill H. Wilson, Brookings Institution

SOCIETY

Marry or Die

You'll live longer if you tie the knot rather than stay single, a new study suggests, and if you stay married rather than split up. Using 1989 and 1997 data from the National Health Interview Survey and the National Death Index respectively, and measuring across a variety of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, researchers found that being unmarried significantly increased one's chances of dying during the period studied, and that this held true for a variety of causes—from cardiovascular disease to “external” causes like accident and suicide. (The correlation between never marrying and dying

from an infectious disease was particularly strong, but this was presumably because of the impact of AIDS on gay unmarried men during the period studied.) Married people had a better life expectancy than widowed or divorced people, but having once been married was better than never having married at all: the widowed had a 39 percent greater risk of dying than the married, and the divorced or separated had a 27 percent higher risk, while the risk was 58 percent higher for those who had never wed in the first place.

—“Marital Status and Longevity in the United States Population,” Robert M. Kaplan and Richard G. Kronick, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*

THE FAMILY

Starstruck in Vietnam

According to Vietnamese astrology, your year of birth shapes your chances in life. Some years are good luck, others are bad luck, and your prospects for health and professional success are dim if you happen to be born in the wrong year. A new study sponsored by the World Bank seems to offer empirical support for this belief: it finds that Vietnamese children born in auspicious years enjoy better health and higher education levels than those born in unlucky years. (This finding holds true even within families—children born in lucky years are healthier and better educated than their “unlucky” siblings.)

However, the authors attribute this effect not to the influence of the zodiac, but to family planning. In a horoscope-conscious society, they argue, children born in auspicious years are more likely to have been planned for, and are more likely to reap the benefits of “favorable financial, psychological, or emotional conditions” than their unplanned-for peers. As evidence that Vietnamese parents plan births around the lucky years, the authors point out that birth cohorts are on average 7 percent larger in years deemed fortunate by the astrologers than in unlucky years.

—“Superstition, Family Planning, and Human Development,” Quy-Toan Do and Tung Duc Phung, World Bank

THE WORKPLACE

Eve's Curse

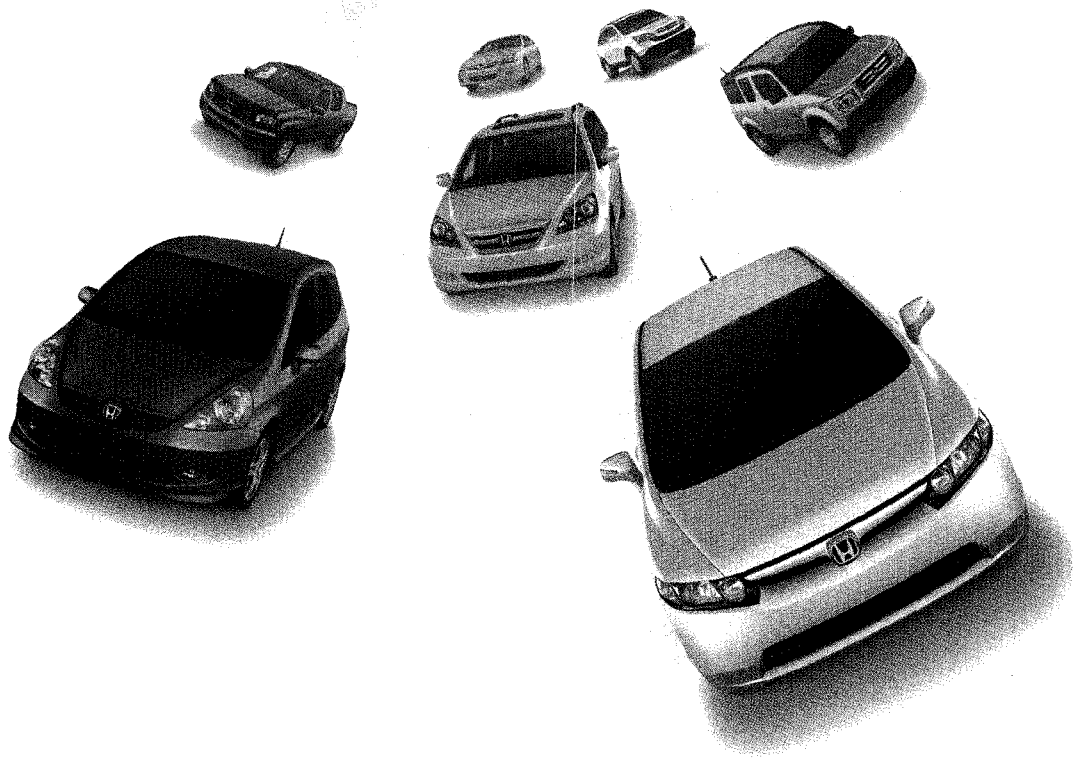
Women earn less than men, on average, and call in sick more often, a new study has found. Two (male) Italian economists blame two-thirds of the sick-day gender gap, and more than a tenth of the male-female wage differential, on menstrual cycles. Analyzing three years of employee data from an Italian bank, they found that women were more likely than men to miss work in twenty-eight-day cycles. When women turned forty-five, however, the male-female difference vanished. (Many men missed work every twenty-eight days, too, but the authors attribute their cycles, at least in part, to the “Monday morning effect”—the well-documented loathing that workers of both genders evidently reserve for the first day of the workweek, which at four-week intervals will resemble a menstrual cycle.) In addition to costing women wages directly by decreasing productivity, the authors hypothesize, these absences are regarded by managers as signs of poor performance. Overall, the study attributes 11.8 percent of the earnings gap between men and women, and 13.5 percent of the promotion gap, to menstruation-related absences.

—“Biological Gender Differences, Absenteeism and the Earning Gap,” Andrea Ichino and Enrico Moretti, National Bureau of Economic Research

For links to the documents discussed in these pages, visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200612/primarysources.

Environmentology

Honda thinking in action.



The most fuel-efficient auto company in America*. Meet Small Oil. Honda has always been committed to developing environmentally responsible technology. And with cars like the all-new Fit along with the legendary Civic, Honda will continue as the leader in fuel efficiency†. Through innovation and hard work, Small Oil can make a world of difference. That's our Environmentology.™

HONDA
The Power of Dreams

*Based on model year 2005 CAFE average fuel-economy ratings and weighted sales for passenger-car and light-truck fleets sold in the U.S. by major manufacturers. †Civic Hybrid and Fit Sport with SMT shown. 2007 EPA mileage estimates: 49 city/51 highway, 33 city/38 highway, respectively. Use for comparison purposes only. Actual mileage may vary. ©2006 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. environmentology.honda.com

You probably don't spend
much time thinking about insurance.



BUT TRY DOING ANYTHING WITHOUT IT.



Consider for a moment that insurance is
the oxygen that fuels our economy.

Makes sense, really. Because without it, sidewalks
wouldn't get paved. There would be no office
buildings, businesses or employees of any kind.
Even this magazine wouldn't get delivered.
The financial risk would be just too big.

The concept behind insurance is to pool that
risk, thus reducing it for everyone. This is
what keeps the heart of free enterprise beating.

And it has helped the United States grow into
the world's largest economy.

So the next time you enjoy a nice, hot cup
of coffee, or pick up your dry cleaning or
even take your kids to the playground, think
about insurance. **Just like oxygen, there is
no way we could get by without it.**

Insurance is the oxygen of free enterprise.
THAT'S ALLSTATE'S STAND

Auto
Home
Life
Retirement



150 YEARS OF THE ATLANTIC

American Icons

This is the eleventh in a series of archival excerpts in honor of the magazine's 150th anniversary. This installment is introduced by Mark Bowden, an Atlantic national correspondent.



NO ONE IN THEIR right mind wants to be profiled by a good writer. It's like playing Russian roulette with your character. Just as a mirror, photo, or honest sketch inevitably shows us things about ourselves that we don't like, how much more telling is a portrait in words, the subtlest of tools, aiming not only at surface but at essence? And no matter how skilled and well-intentioned, the writer will fail. Getting the subject wrong is guaranteed, because the essence of anyone is evanescent, a mystery even to himself. The egotistical will be disappointed, the modest appalled.

When I was a newspaper reporter, and much younger, I wrote plenty of bad ones. It is a standard assignment: profile the prominent figure passing through town. The challenge is usually perceived as an effort to wrangle access, an audience or an interview, and the forgettable story that typically follows consists of a faithful account of that brief encounter. This is

still what passes for a profile in most magazines. It took me a while to learn that the encounter and interview were often the least valuable aspects of the story. What mattered far more was observation, research, and above all, insight. Personality and character are revealed less in words than in action. In some of the best profiles ever written the writer never talked to his subject.

That's true of at least two of the writers below: Robert A. Caro, whose bit here about young Lyndon Baines Johnson is just a snippet from one of the best (though still-unfinished) biographies ever written of an American president; and Norman Mailer, who has said that after his friend Arthur Miller married Marilyn Monroe, the subject of his profile, he hoped the playwright would invite him to dinner—"so that I could steal her"; the invitation never came. What matters most about any profile is not the subject per se but the way that subject is perceived by others, and ultimately by the writer. When you get the combination of a great subject and a great writer, the product isn't just journalism or history—it's art. —MARK BOWDEN

For the full text of these articles, visit www.theatlantic.com/ideastour.

THOREAU

August 1862

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

....

Three months after Thoreau's death, from tuberculosis, The Atlantic published a tribute to him by his friend and mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson. The essay, offering an honest portrait of a difficult and unconventional but brilliant man, had previously been presented as the eulogy at Thoreau's funeral.

He was born in Concord, Massachusetts, on the 12th of July, 1817. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1837, but without any literary distinction. An iconoclast in literature, he seldom thanked colleges for their service to him, holding them in small esteem, whilst yet his debt to them was important. After leaving the University, he joined his brother in teaching [at] a private school, which he soon renounced. His father was a manufacturer of lead-pencils,

and Henry applied himself for a time to this craft, believing he could make a better pencil than was then in use. After completing his experiments, he exhibited his work to chemists and artists in Boston, and having obtained their certificates to its excellence and to its equality with the best London manufacture, he returned home contented. His friends congratulated him that he had now opened his way to fortune. But he replied, that he should never make another pencil. "Why should I? I would not do again what I have done once" ...

At this time, a strong, healthy youth, fresh from college, whilst all his companions were choosing their profession, or eager to begin some lucrative employment, it was inevitable that his thoughts should be exercised on the same question, and it required rare decision to refuse all the accustomed paths, and keep his solitary freedom at the cost of disappointing the natural expectations of his family and friends ... But Thoreau never faltered. He was a born protestant. He declined to give up his large ambition of knowledge and action for any narrow craft or profession, aiming at a much more comprehensive calling, the art of living well ...

He was bred to no profession; he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. He chose, wisely, no doubt, for himself, to be the bachelor of thought and Nature ...

No truer American existed than Thoreau. His preference of his country and condition was genuine, and his aversion from English and European manners and tastes almost reached contempt. He listened impatiently to news or *bon mots* gleaned from London circles; and though he tried to be civil, these anecdotes fatigued him. The men were all imitating each other, and on a small mould. Why can they not live as far apart as possible, and each be a man by himself? What he sought was the most energetic nature; and he wished to go to Oregon, not to London ...

He understood the matter in hand at a glance, and saw the limitations and poverty of those he talked with, so that nothing seemed concealed from such terrible eyes. I have repeatedly known young men of sensibility converted in a moment to the belief that this man was the man they were in search of, the man of men, who could tell them all they should do.

Vol. 10, No. 58, pp. 239-249

EMERSON

December 1904

BY HENRY JAMES SR.

....

In a piece originally written in the late 1860s, but published in The Atlantic many years later, Henry James Sr.—the father of Henry James the novelist and William James the philosopher-psychologist—sought to explain just what it was about Emerson's unassuming personality that carried such magnetism.

It is now full thirty years ago that I made Mr. Emerson's acquaintance. He had come at the time to New York to read a course of lectures. These I diligently attended, and I saw much of him also in private. He at once captivated my imagination, and I have been ever since his loving bondman. I tried assiduously during the early days of our intimacy to solve intellectually the mystery of his immense fascination; but I did not succeed. I could very well see what the charm was *not*. It did not the least consist, for example, in any intellectual mastery he exhibited; for what he mainly held to be true I could not help regarding as false, and what he mainly held to be false I regarded as true. Still less did any conventional graces or accomplishments account for the spell he wrought; for no man was more austere than he in manners, or less addicted to the arts of pleasing ... But what the magic actually *was*, I could not at all divine, save that it was intensely

personal, attaching much more to what he was in himself, or by nature, than to what he was in aspiration, or by culture. I often found myself, in fact, thinking: if this man were only a woman, I should be sure to fall in love with him ...

It was utterly impossible to listen to Mr. Emerson's lectures, without being perpetually haunted as to your intellect by the subtlest and most searching aroma of personality ... His demeanour upon the platform ... was modesty itself: not the mere absence of display, but the presence of a positive personal grace. His deferential entrance upon the scene, his look of inquiry at the desk and the chair, his resolute rummaging among his embarrassed papers, the air of sudden recollection with which he would plunge into his pockets for what he must have known had never been put there, his uncertainty and irresolution as he rose to speak, his deep, relieved inspiration as he got well from under the burning-glass of his auditors' eyes, and addressed himself at length to their docile ears instead: no maiden ever appealed more potently to your enamoured and admiring sympathy. And then when he looked over the heads of his audience into the dim mysterious distance, and his weird monotone began to reverberate in your bosom's depths, and his words flowed on, now with a river's volume, grand, majestic, free, and anon diminished themselves to the fitful cadence of a brook, impeded in its course, and returning in melodious coquetry upon itself, and you saw the clear eye eloquent with nature's purity, and beheld the musing countenance turned within, as it were, and hearkening to the rumour of a far-off but oncoming world: how intensely personal, how exquisitely characteristic, it all was! ...

I find in no man, especially no man equally famous, anything like the exquisite, unaffected, perfectly unconscious deference he pays to every other man's freedom ... He seems to me absolutely void of covetousness; entertains no clandestine designs upon any one; would not if he could impose his sway upon you; is destitute of all persuasive arts; has no resources either of flattery or command; is so ignorant, indeed, of all our accustomed devices in this sort, and so estranged from our ordinary corrupt manners in general, as to appear to most people utterly inexpressive; and yet he draws all men unto him, is sure of their spontaneous homage.

Vol. 94, No. 566, pp. 740-745

ROBERT FROST, MAN AND MYTH

November 1966

BY JAMES DICKEY

....

In the course of reviewing a new Robert Frost biography, the poet James Dickey (whose best-selling novel, Deliverance, would be published four years later) dismantled the myth of Frost as kindly farmer-poet.

Belovèd" is a term that must always be mistrusted when applied to artists, and particularly to poets. Poets are likely to be belovèd for only a few of the right reasons, and for almost all the wrong ones: for saying things we want to hear, for furnishing us with an image of ourselves that we enjoy believing in, even for living for a long time in the public eye and pronouncing sagely on current affairs. Robert Frost has been long admired for all these things, and is consequently one of the most misread writers in the whole of American literature ...

Frost was born in San Francisco in 1874. [In a new biography by Lawrance Thompson], we watch him live through the decline and death of his alcoholic, ambitious father, follow him as he is shunted around New England as a poor relation, supported by his gentle, mystical mother's pathetically inept attempts to be a teacher. We see him develop, as compensation, a fanatical and paranoiac self-esteem with its attendant devils of humiliation, jealousy, and frustration. He considers suicide, tries poultry farming, loses a child, settles on poetry as a way of salvation—something, at last, that he can do, at least to some extent—borrows money and fails to pay it back, perseveres with a great deal of tenacity and courage but also with a sullen self-righteousness with which one can have but very little sympathy.

He wanted, and from his early days ... to be "great," distinctive, different, a law unto himself, admired but not restricted by those who admired him. He did well in high school when he found that good marks earned him a distinction he had never had before, but he was continually hampered by his arrogance and his jealousy of others, and after graduation seems to have been able to do little else but insult the people who tried to help him and accept and quit one humiliating job after another with as bad grace as possible.

During all this time, however, his writing developed, and in a remarkably straight line ...

The *persona* of the Frost Story was made year by year, poem by poem, of elements of the actual life Frost lived, reinterpreted by the exigencies of the *persona*. He had, for example, some knowledge of farming, though he was never a farmer by anything but default. Physically he was a lazy man, which is perhaps why images of work figure so strongly in his poems. Through these figures in his most famous pieces, probably his best poems—hayng, apple-picking, mowing, cleaning springs, and mending walls—he indulged in what with him was the only effective mode of self-defense he had been able to devise: the capacity to claim competence at the menial tasks he habitually shirked, and to assert, from that claim, authority, "earned truth," and a wisdom elusive, personal, and yet final ...

What he accomplished, in the end, was what he became. Not what he became as a public figure, forgotten as quickly as other public figures are, but what he became as a poet ...

His poems were a tremendous *physical* feat, a lifelong muscular striving after survival. Though [he was] tragically

hard on the people who loved him, put up with him, and suffered because of him, Frost's courage and stubbornness are plain, and they are impressive. But no one who reads this book will ever again believe in the Frost Story, the Frost myth, which includes the premises that Frost the man was kindly, forbearing, energetic, hardworking, good-neighborly, or anything but the small-minded, vindictive, ill-tempered, egotistic, cruel, and unforgiving man he was until the world deigned to accept at face value his estimate of himself.

Vol. 218, No. 5, pp. 53-56

MARILYN MONROE

August 1973

BY NORMAN MAILER

....

In an excerpt from his then-forthcoming biography of Monroe, Norman Mailer offered a look at Monroe's ill-starred marriage to the playwright Arthur Miller, the insecurities that plagued her, and her longing to be more than a sex goddess.

How beautiful they look in their wedding pictures. Staid Arthur Miller has been a scandal to his friends ... for he and Marilyn sit in entwinement for hours. Like Hindu sculpture, their hands go over one another's torsos, limbs, and outright privates in next to full view of company ...

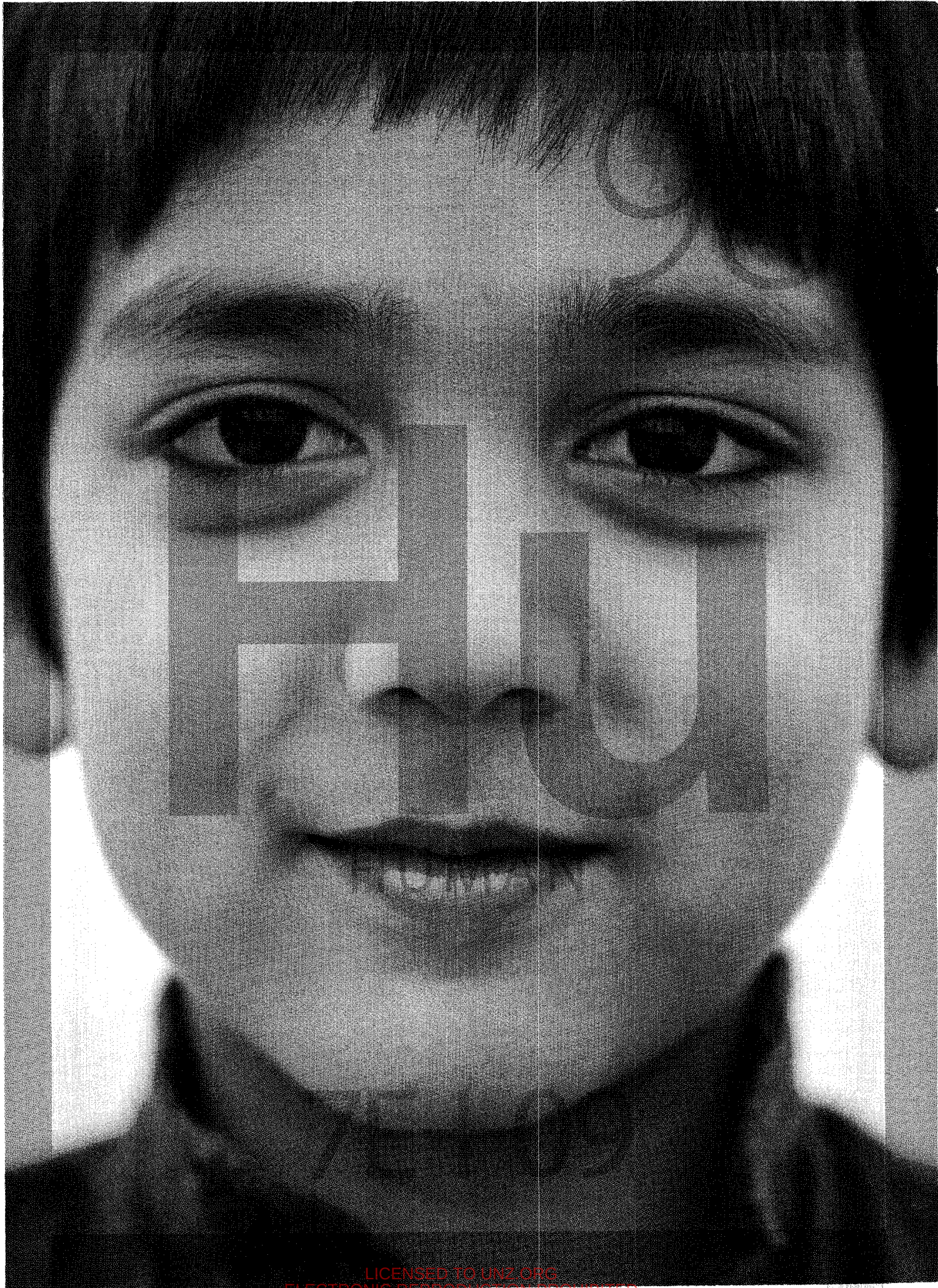
But ... like everything else in Marilyn's life, she lived in the continuing condition of a half-lie, which she imposed upon everyone as an absolute truth—it was that Miller adored her out of measure. Like a *goddess*. Since Miller was also a man with such separate needs as the imperative to write well ... this half-lie or half-truth that he adored her without limit had to collapse ... Now there was an absolute denial, equally ill-founded. He did not love her at all. He wished only to use her ...

She, with her profound distrust of everyone about her, begins to suspect him. Has he married her because he can't write anymore? Is his secret ambition to become a Hollywood producer? ...

She has lived with the beautiful idea that some day she and Arthur would make a film that would bestow upon her public identity a soul. Her existence as a sex queen will be reincarnated in a woman. It is not that her sex will disappear so much as that the sex queen will become an angel of sex ...

It was as if she wanted to become the angel of American life; as if, beneath every remaining timidity and infirmity, she felt that she deserved it. Perhaps she did. Are there ten women's lives so Napoleonic as her own?

Vol. 232, No. 2, pp. 33-53



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AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE LAWS OF CHEMISTRY CHANGE. A world that includes

the Human Element, along with hydrogen, oxygen and the other elements, is a very different world



indeed. Suddenly, chemistry is put to work solving human problems. Bonds are formed

between aspirations and commitments. And the energy released from reactions fuels a



boundless spirit that will make the planet a safer, cleaner, more comfortable place for generations to

come. A world that welcomes change is about to meet the element of change: the Human Element.

THE YEARS OF LYNDON JOHNSON

April 1982

BY ROBERT A. CARO

....

In 1982, the Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Robert A. Caro profiled former President Lyndon Johnson as an uncannily driven twenty-eight-year-old first-time candidate for Congress.

All his adult life, because of the agonies of his youth, the insecurity and shame of growing up poor in the Hill Country, [Johnson] had grasped frantically at every chance to escape that past, no matter how slender. In Washington, and before that, teaching school in Houston and Cotulla, he had worked so feverishly, driven himself so furiously—had whipped himself into the frantic effort that journalists and biographers would describe as the result of “energy” when what lay behind it was really desperation and fear. He wanted, he told aides, to do “everything”—*everything*—possible to succeed, to earn respect, to “be somebody.” As one said, “There was a feeling—if you did *everything*, you would win.”

The feeling had been reinforced by experience. In each of his jobs, he *had* done “everything”—had lashed himself into an effort in which, an aide says, “hours made no difference, days made no difference, nights made no difference,” into an effort in which he worked weekday and weekend, day and night. And he *had* “won,” had made the most of each of those slender chances ...

The men who knew Johnson best—who knew best how utterly unsparing of himself he was willing to be—had felt at the start of the campaign that, as [his aide] Gene Latimer put it, “No matter what anyone said, we felt he had a chance, because we knew he would work harder than anyone else.” But even these men had not known how hard he would work ...

At the end of a long day of campaigning, the sun would be disappearing behind the hills; the first stars might be out. Or perhaps darkness would already have fallen—the black darkness of Hill Country, unbroken for miles by a single light. Keach [his driver] might have pointed the car back toward Austin; if it was dark, the city would be a glow on the horizon as he sped through the black hills, so tired that he could hardly keep awake, and could think only of falling into his bed. And then Johnson, sitting beside him, rechecking in the fading sunlight or in the light from the dashboard the list of names he had been handed that morning, would realize that somehow they had missed one, that one farm back there in the hills behind them had not been visited. “If that happened,” Keach recalls, “we would go back, no matter how hungry and tired we were, no matter how far it was. Sometimes I could hardly believe we were going back, but we always did.” He would turn the car; they would be heading away from the glow in the sky, back into

the hills, back along the highway looking for the mailbox, then along the path the mailbox marked, jouncing through the ruts in the dark. Keach knew how tired his Chief was. But his Chief was portraying a candidate with youth and energy—it was important that voters not see his tiredness. “He would be very fatigued, *very*,” Keach says. “But he never let a voter see the fatigue.” When they reached the farm at the end of the path, all the farmer would see, in the last rays of daylight or in the glow of a kerosene lamp, as Lyndon Johnson strode toward him, was a face—young, eager, enthusiastic—all alight to see him ...

Lyndon Johnson had determined, many years before, the emotion that would govern his life—the emotion that, with “inflexible will,” would be the only emotion that he would *allow* to govern his life. “It is ambition,” he had written in an editorial in his college newspaper, “that makes of a creature a real man.” Pride, embarrassment, gloating: such emotions could only hinder his progress along the road he saw so clearly before him. They were luxuries in which he would not indulge himself.

Vol. 249, No. 4, pp. 34–89

AMERICAN EVERYMAN

November 2004

BY WALTER KIRN

....

Two years ago, the novelist and critic Walter Kirn considered Warren Buffett as American symbol.

The popular business media have for some time now been missing the big story when it comes to the country’s second richest man. Buffett’s fortune ... has become the least interesting thing about him. It’s Buffett the symbol that matters now, Buffett the folk hero ...

There is a line of self-made, iconoclastic, pragmatic, larger-than-life American Everymen that begins in the popular mind with Benjamin Franklin, and runs through Mark Twain, Will Rogers, and Harry Truman, but also shows up in such far-flung characters as Walt Whitman, Henry Ford, and Ernest Hemingway. They are the fresh-air paragons of democratic self-invention—the anti-phonies who tell it like it is and, with their grassroots words and ways, rebuke the pretentious sophistication of Europeanized elites ...

Warren Buffett, as much as anyone else alive right now, belongs to this indispensable tradition ...

Biographers and magazine writers love to detail Buffett’s austerity—his middle-class house, his bare-bones corporate headquarters, his decision to stay put in Omaha—but they make a mistake when they accuse him of modesty. In a man worth tens of billions of dollars, self-deprecation is a boast.

Vol. 294, No. 4, pp. 104–112

THE **Atlantic**

Who are the most influential figures in American history? The Atlantic recently asked ten eminent historians. The result was The Atlantic's Top 100—and some insight into the nature of influence and the contingency of history. Was Walt Disney really more influential than Elizabeth Cady Stanton? Benjamin Spock than Richard Nixon? Elvis Presley than Lewis and Clark? John D. Rockefeller than Bill Gates? Babe Ruth than Frank Lloyd Wright? Let the debates begin.

THEY MADE AMERICA

We invite you to join the debate—and to nominate influential figures who didn't make The Atlantic's Top 100 but should have—at www.theatlantic.com. The collective readers' Top 10 list will be published in our next issue.

It's a nebulous concept, influence:

you know it when you see it, but definitions are hard to come by. Still, when we talk about history in America, it's often to make arguments about influence, about the way the characters from our national past shape the virtues and flaws of our own era. ¶ Thus, depending

BY ROSS DOUTHAT

on whom you believe, George W. Bush is either the rightful heir to Harry Truman or the bastard child of Richard Nixon and Lyndon Baines Johnson. His critics are the successors of Walter Duranty and Jane Fonda, making apologies for tyrants—unless they're Edward R. Murrow and Eugene McCarthy, boldly speaking truth to power. Foreign-policy analysts talk of modern-day “Jacksonians” and “Wilsonianians”; defenders and opponents of affirmative action alike invoke Martin Luther King Jr.; and everyone claims the Founders for their own—because the founding generation's influence, and example, is felt to matter most of all.

With these debates in mind, *The Atlantic* recently asked ten historians (see panelist biographies on page 76) to compose their own lists of the 100 most influential Americans. The balloting was averaged and weighted to emphasize consensus—candidates received extra points if they appeared on multiple ballots—and the result is the list of 100 names that accompanies this article. In the instructions we gave to our panelists, we intentionally defined *influence* loosely—as a person's impact, for good or ill, both on his or her own era and on the way we live now. This allowed for a certain creativity in the selection process, and it had the advantage of leaving the harder work of definition to the historians themselves.

The results are inevitably unscientific, since whittling down all the influential Americans of the last few centuries to just 100 names, let alone ranking them, is a difficult assignment. But the end product is rewarding and intriguing, offering instances of both consensus and contention, and a snapshot of our national memory early in the third American century. It doesn't settle the debate about influence and the American past, but it does offer a starting place for discussion.

Anyone trying to arrive at a historical ranking must wrestle with certain questions. Our panelist Walter McDougall, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age*, described five challenges that he and his fellow historians reckoned with in making their judgments for our list.

The definition of influence. What definition would allow us to rank Americans from different careers and walks of life—to compare the influence of a great novelist with the influence of a president, for instance, or the influence of a religious leader with that of an entrepreneur? Or again, what definition would allow for comparisons between present-day figures and the men and women of earlier generations? The influence of a nineteenth-century titan like John D. Rockefeller (who ended up No. 11 on our list) extends across a longer period of American history than the influence of a Bill Clinton; on the other hand, Clinton's *direct* impact on the way we live now is more immediately obvious than Rockefeller's. By what criteria does one choose between them?

The collaborative nature of achievement. Once you begin to weigh ideas against inventions, presidencies against companies, and present-day achievements against the past, another question arises: Who should get the credit? Do you cite Nathaniel Hawthorne for writing the first great American novel, or James Fenimore Cooper (83) for making the American novel possible? Who deserves credit for the Constitution, or the motion-picture industry, or the birth of jazz? "Harriet Beecher Stowe [41] was 'the little lady who wrote the book that caused the Great War,'" McDougall points out, "but only because abolitionists both white and black had been preaching the same gospel for decades." Even technical geniuses stood on the shoulders of giants: if Robert Fulton hadn't developed the first commercially successful steamboat, someone else would have; we might not have iPods without Steve Jobs, but we'd still have some pretty nice personal computers.

The power of pop culture. The simplest way to define influence would be to

use market indicators. Whom have Americans heard of, and whom do they esteem? What products do they buy, and what television shows do they watch? Such a list would "read like a Gallup Poll or Madison Avenue guide to consumer trends," McDougall says, with Michael Crichton outstripping Herman Melville (100), and Joel Osteen beating out Reinhold Niebuhr. But perhaps this is as it should be. "The America our forefathers brought forth on this continent is a *market*—a free market in power, goods and services, entertainment, and spirituality," McDougall points out. "By definition, it would seem [that] the ultimate measure of influence is simply what sells."

The problem of value judgments. This is the "Adolf Hitler problem": How do you assess the influence of men and women who have changed the world for the worse? In America, call it the "Hugh Hefner problem": Does a man who has spent a lifetime lounging around in a bathrobe, getting rich off the objectification of women, really deserve a place in anyone's Top 100? On the other hand, if you're looking for the journalistic giants of the last century, doesn't Hef deserve a place alongside a Henry Luce or an H. L. Mencken? And if you open the door for the man who gave us porn-on-demand, does a parade of demagogues come trooping in after him? George Wallace, Huey Long, Joseph McCarthy, J. Edgar Hoover—"We might find that half our list is a rogues' gallery," McDougall suggests.

The question of identity politics. America may be a melting pot, but influence often fails to extend beyond the barrio's edge, or the synagogue door. "Must the leaders of every ethnic or religious minority be honored," McDougall wonders, "even though they had little or no influence on the nation at large?" How broadly influential were Joseph Smith (52) or Brigham Young (74), really, given that Mormons currently account for less than 2 percent of the American population? Does César Chávez deserve extra consideration for looming so large among Hispanics? Does a gay-rights pioneer like Harvey Milk deserve consideration, for similar reasons?

Each panelist found a different response to these challenges. For Ellen

THE TOP 100



1 ABRAHAM LINCOLN
He saved the Union, freed the slaves, and presided over America's second founding.

2 GEORGE WASHINGTON
He made the United States possible—not only by defeating a king, but by declining to become one himself.

3 THOMAS JEFFERSON
The author of the five most important words in American history: "All men are created equal."



4 FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT
He said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," and then he proved it.

5 ALEXANDER HAMILTON
Soldier, banker, and political scientist, he set in motion an agrarian nation's transformation into an industrial power.

6 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
The Founder-of-all-trades—scientist, printer, writer, diplomat, inventor, and more; like his country, he contained multitudes.

7 JOHN MARSHALL
The defining chief justice, he established the Supreme Court as the equal of the other two federal branches.



8 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
His dream of racial equality is still elusive, but no one did more to make it real.

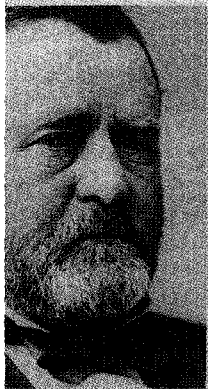
9 THOMAS EDISON
It wasn't just the lightbulb; the Wizard of Menlo Park was the most prolific inventor in American history.

10 WOODROW WILSON
He made the world safe for U.S. interventionism, if not for democracy.



List continues on pages 62–78

11 JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER
The man behind Standard Oil set the mold for our tycoons—first by making money, then by giving it away.



12 ULYSSES S. GRANT
He was a poor president, but he was the general Lincoln needed; he also wrote the greatest political memoir in American history.

13 JAMES MADISON
He fathered the Constitution and wrote the Bill of Rights.

14 HENRY FORD
He gave us the assembly line and the Model T, and sparked America's love affair with the automobile.

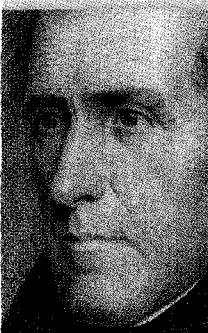


15 THEODORE ROOSEVELT
Whether busting trusts or building canals, he embodied the "strenuous life" and blazed a trail for twentieth-century America.



16 MARK TWAIN
Author of our national epic, he was the most unsentimental observer of our national life.

17 RONALD REAGAN
The amiable architect of both the conservative realignment and the Cold War's end.



18 ANDREW JACKSON
The first great populist: he found America a republic and left it a democracy.

19 THOMAS PAINE
The voice of the American Revolution, and our first great radical.

20 ANDREW CARNEGIE
The original self-made man forged America's industrial might and became one of the nation's greatest philanthropists.

Fitzpatrick, a professor at the University of New Hampshire and the author of *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880–1980*, the central questions were whether a person's influence was at once "long-term" and "fundamental." So the Founders, for instance, deserve a high place because "without their vision of American democracy, not much else would have happened as it did." But a figure like Bill Gates (54), however significant, loses out in Fitzpatrick's estimation to the computer scientist John von Neumann, because "it was von Neumann's research that helped make computing possible," and so his contribution to the computer was more "fundamental" than Gates's work. (Fitzpatrick was outvoted on von Neumann, who failed to make the Top 100.)

Walter McDougall adopted a policy of giving weight to individuals involved with the federal government, "because they shaped the laws and institutions under which *all* Americans live"; to "the

"originals"—that is, "people who laid the foundations for enduring institutions or cultural practices or ways of thinking."

For Doris Kearns Goodwin, who won a Pulitzer Prize for *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*, the important question was, "Which figures changed the daily lives of people, both at that time and afterward?" She looked, in particular, for "great public figures who made it possible for people to lead expanded lives—materially, psychologically, culturally, spiritually."

Brown University professor Gordon S. Wood, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, tried to pay attention to "peculiar personalities," like Abraham Lincoln (1) and George Washington (2), who were "ideally suited for the moment" in which they wielded influence. But he also looked for what he termed "stand-ins"—figures like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong (79), who could embody a

**A political career (or a legal one) is
the surest ticket to a historical legacy.
But inventing things, discovering things,
or founding a religion can also work.**

leaders in business and technology who fashioned the material environment of *all* Americans"; and to "the leaders in religion and education who influenced what most Americans believe and know, especially about their own country." He "omitted ethnic leaders who, while honored ... influenced only a modest percentage of Americans," and he "eliminated celebrities altogether on the grounds that their influence is shallow, ephemeral, and replaceable."

David M. Kennedy, a Stanford professor and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945*, made a similar calculation. "Most 'athletes, icons, and celebrities' don't make my list," he wrote, because entertainment is "highly evanescent" and most entertainers tend to "leave no lasting legacy." What he looked for instead were

hugely collaborative industry, art form, or cultural change, and "represent a dozen or a half-dozen people."

H. W. Brands, a professor at the University of Texas and the author of *The Money Men: Capitalism, Democracy, and the Hundred Years' War Over the American Dollar*, took a similar tack, choosing some people based on "what they represent"—Nat Turner (93) for the "specter of slave rebellion," for instance, or Sam Goldwyn (95) because "Hollywood had to be represented." He also noted that a bias toward political figures is inevitable. "Political figures," he said, "are important precisely because they influence the lives of everybody."

On the other hand, Robert Dallek—though he's a presidential historian and the author, most recently, of *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963*—tried to privilege commerce and

invention. "When people look back on this society, they will attach greater importance to science, technology, and business achievements than to our politics, or our arts and literature." He also gave special weight to the power of ideas, which form an "undercurrent" in American life—until suddenly, as with the civil-rights movement, a sense emerges that "this is an idea whose time has come."

Mark Noll, a professor at the University of Notre Dame and the author of *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, shared Brands's expectation that politics would dominate the final list, but suggested that this was a reflection of how history has been taught—"as a political narrative or as a reaction against the political narrative." He contended there is "little room for religion" in either of these narratives—even though religious organizations "have been the main glue in American society since before there was a United States." His own list drove that point home, by including little-remembered but hugely influential figures like the nineteenth-century revivalist Charles Grandison Finney, or the itinerant Methodist bishop Francis Asbury.

Similarly, panelist John Steele Gordon, the author of *An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power*, distinguished between fame and influence, citing as an example the distinction between Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin. "Both were very famous," he argued, "but only Kern changed Broadway forever."

Like many of her fellow panelists, Joyce Appleby, a professor emerita at UCLA, showed a strong bias toward the Founders—those "rather remarkable men making decisions whose impact has been tremendously positive." But she declined to propose any broader system for gauging influence. "I reflected," she said of her choices. "But it was more of an intuitive and ineffable process."

So what do the panelists' reflections tell us about influence in America? First that although the top third of the list, roughly speaking, embodies a strong consensus—every panelist voted for the first nine figures; everyone in the top thirty received at least seven votes—

AN EXPERT'S OPINION

INFLUENTIAL ARCHITECTS

BY MICHAEL J. LEWIS

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING (1815–1852)

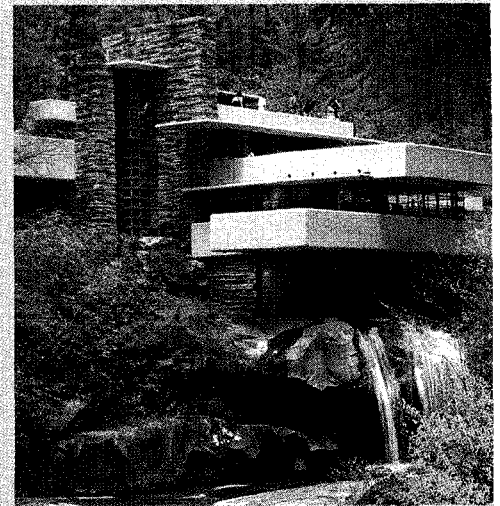
Anyone who has grown up in a suburban house, visited a cul-de-sac lined with ranch houses, or driven through Levittown has been touched by A. J. Downing. He was the creator of the American suburb—not its forms alone, but its philosophy. His illustrated pattern books, especially *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), created our modern image of the suburb: strongly individualized houses sitting on winding streets, picturesquely integrated with nature. At the core of Downing's thought was a moral understanding of suburban life, and he should not be blamed for the McMansions that parody his precepts.

DANIEL H. BURNHAM (1846–1912)

"Make no little plans," urged Burnham, who heeded his own advice in his master plans for Chicago and for the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Although he built such jewels as Washington's Union Station, his achievement is not really aesthetic. He brought to architecture, for better or worse, the values of the American business tycoon: boldness of vision, ferocious executive energy, and an itch to do things at the largest possible scale. His influence, though, has been mixed: the movement that began by creating America's loveliest public spaces, such as Chicago's grand Civic Center plaza, ended in the megalomania of postwar urban renewal—and the lofty, tragic hubris of Chicago's notorious Cabrini-Green.

MORRIS LAPIDUS (1902–2001)

To understand American drinking habits, one does not look at Beaujolais sales but at Coke. Likewise, in seeking to understand American architecture, one does not look to such boutique designers as Frank Gehry or Robert Venturi but to the authors of our modern vernacular and its apartment houses and casinos, its highway mini-malls and kidney-shaped swimming pools. Here the most influential designer by far was Lapidus, the instigator of the great tacky hotels of South Florida, whose turquoise-tiled lobbies and giddy squiggles created the visual landscape of the



Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater

postwar world, finding wit, humor, and even a kind of dignity in bad taste.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT (1867–1959)

Before Wright, an American building was a platitude: a form plucked from Europe's history, adapted to American climate, materials, and social structure, and proclaiming good taste. Wright removed the historical costume to let the indigenous factors themselves create the design directly and frankly. The result was the Prairie Style, his characteristically horizontal houses with their open plans and flowing space. Wright remains America's greatest modernist, with his stubborn individualism and his insight that a building can be as objective as a suspension bridge and at the same time as intensely personal as a Whitman poem.

HOWARD ROARK (1943–)

It may seem odd to list a fictional character, yet the hero of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* profoundly influenced American architecture by changing the public image of the architect. Before Roark, the architect was considered a mere service provider, a rather bookish sort who knew about cathedrals and dry rot. Roark, by contrast, was a levathan of ego and will, his creativity deriving from his existential confrontation with the universe. In him was born the debased architectural culture of today, a wasteland of celebrities each cultivating his own distinctive signature style; whatever Roark's literary legacy, his architectural one has been an unmitigated disaster.

Michael J. Lewis is a professor at Williams College and the author of American Art and Architecture.



21 HARRY TRUMAN

An accidental president, this machine politician ushered in the Atomic Age and then the Cold War.

22 WALT WHITMAN

He sang of America and shaped the country's conception of itself.

23 WRIGHT BROTHERS

They got us all off the ground.



24 ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

By inventing the telephone, he opened the age of telecommunications and shrank the world.

25 JOHN ADAMS

His leadership made the American Revolution possible; his devotion to republicanism made it succeed.

26 WALT DISNEY

The quintessential entertainer-entrepreneur, he wielded unmatched influence over our childhood.

27 ELI WHITNEY

His gin made cotton king and sustained an empire for slavery.



28 DWIGHT EISENHOWER

He won a war and two elections, and made everybody like Ike.

29 EARL WARREN

His Supreme Court transformed American society and bequeathed to us the culture wars.



30 ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

One of the first great American feminists, she fought for social reform and women's right to vote.

31 HENRY CLAY

One of America's greatest legislators and orators, he forged compromises that held off civil war for decades.

32 ALBERT EINSTEIN

His greatest scientific work was done in Europe, but his humanity earned him undying fame in America.



33 RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The bard of individualism, he relied on himself—and told us all to do the same.

34 JONAS SALK

His vaccine for polio eradicated one of the world's worst plagues.



35 JACKIE ROBINSON

He broke baseball's color barrier and embodied integration's promise.

36 WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

"The Great Commoner" lost three presidential elections, but his populism transformed the country.

37 J. P. MORGAN

The great financier and banker was the prototype for all the Wall Street barons who followed.

38 SUSAN B. ANTHONY

She was the country's most eloquent voice for women's equality under the law.



39 RACHEL CARSON

The author of *Silent Spring* was godmother to the environmental movement.

40 JOHN DEWEY

He sought to make the public school a training ground for democratic life.

41 HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* inspired a generation of abolitionists and set the stage for civil war.



42 ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

She used the first lady's office and the mass media to become "first lady of the world."

agreement is hard to come by. Many figures who made the final cut did so with only marginally more support than those who missed it.

Still, certain patterns are evident. The list tells us, for instance, that though we may be a nation of immigrants, it's the native-born who are likely to shake things up the most: just seven of the final 100 were born outside the continental United States. It tells us that the East Coast states have made the most of their head start: sixty-three of the 100 were born in the original thirteen colonies, and twenty-six in New England alone. It tells would-be influentials not to be afraid of family commitments: ninety-one of the 100 were married at least once, and two—Joseph Smith and Brigham Young—had more than fifty wives between them. The list also suggests that contemporaries are sometimes good judges of whose influence will last: nine of *Time* magazine's "People of the Year" show up on the historians' list.

A political career (or a legal one) is the surest ticket to a historical legacy (twenty-six of the 100 held a judgeship or high political office). Aspiring influentials might also consider trying to invent something (like the lightbulb, or the airplane, or the atomic bomb), or discover something (the polio vaccine, the double helix)—though Gordon S. Wood remarked, after the list was finished, "We put too much emphasis on inventors. Someone sooner or later would have come up with the cotton gin . . . the lure of profits was too great. The same was true with the airplane and the telephone."

Founding a religion landed Joseph Smith and Brigham Young on the list, as well as Christian Science's Mary Baker Eddy (86). Fomenting a revolution also leaves an impression, whether you succeed, as the Founders did, or fail, but with long-lasting repercussions, as Nat Turner and John Brown (78) did. And we at *The Atlantic* were pleased to see that twenty-one of the figures in the Top 100 are especially famous for their writing, from Walt Whitman (22) to Margaret Mead (81)—and that more than thirty (!) of the figures on the list have been published in this magazine.

The final 100 also suggests that men still rule, at least in many historians'

eyes—oh, and make that white men. Ten women are on the list (the highest-ranked is the feminist pioneer Elizabeth Cady Stanton, at No. 30), and eight African Americans, but the Top 100 is heavily WASPish. Martin Luther King Jr. (8) was among the top vote getters, but there isn't another African American on the list until Jackie Robinson (35). And there are no Hispanics, Asian Americans, or Native Americans.

"It's fun and challenging," Ellen Fitzpatrick said of the exercise, but she called the rank order "an exercise in absurdity." Noting that Walt Disney (26) finished ahead of Stanton in the balloting, she wondered: "Does a cartoonist deserve a place above someone who most powerfully advanced the case that half the people deserved equality before the law?" Or again, "Are we to conclude that not a single Native American Indian influenced our past?"

If women and minorities are conspicuously absent, what about knaves? With only two votes, Cold War bogeyman Joseph McCarthy didn't make the Top 100, nor did minor demagogues like Huey Long and Charles Coughlin. (Nor Hugh Hefner, though Walter McDougall voted for him.) But the much-reviled Richard Nixon (99) is in the Top 100, as is the pro-slavery legislator John C. Calhoun (58).

In a sense, perhaps, the final list is a testament to the absence of true villains from the American past—or at least figures that everyone can agree were villainous. For every conservative who damns Earl Warren (29) or Betty Friedan (77), there's a liberal springing to the defense. The same is true, with the cheers and boos reversed, for Ronald Reagan (17) or Wal-Mart's Sam Walton (72).

Our historians seem to have made a definite judgment, however, against pop culture, and popular taste in general. The list contains seven novelists but only three musicians, Elvis Presley (66), Louis Armstrong (79), and the songwriter Stephen Foster (97), and two athletes, Jackie Robinson and George Herman "Babe" Ruth (75). There's one Hollywood mogul (Sam Goldwyn), but no directors or actors (save, of course, Reagan). And of the many novelists,

AN EXPERT'S OPINION

INFLUENTIAL FILMMAKERS

BY DAVID THOMSON

D. W. GRIFFITH (1875–1948)

Griffith took glimpses and made schemes. He saw that suspense was our reason for watching. His objects of suspense were archaic, trite, and worse (virginity, piety, the South's nobility), but a business was born with 1915's *Birth of a Nation*—along with every warning that the industry might be scurrilous, dangerous, and the province of rascals. President Wilson called the movie "history written in lightning"—so pretentious film criticism was under way, too. Despite attendant geniuses (the Gish sisters, the cameraman Billy Bitzer), Griffith's movies are hard to watch now. His world of film was perishable—everything goes off fast. He made people sit for three hours, and come back for more. It was the essential principle of American life: keep the public still.

ORSON WELLES (1915–1985)

Welles believed in being a great man. Therefore if he did films, filmmaking must be a great medium and art—an Art. He went to Hollywood to defy law and order—to make a film his way, in defiance of accepted customs and manners; or better still, to make it about himself. So Charles Foster Kane is less William Randolph Hearst than George Orson Welles. The director fought with the studio system, disdained money, preferred unfettered ego, and demonstrated the great danger of such an artistic soul. Also, his life suggested that charm is a very dangerous thing, and enough to ruin America. The final irony: despite an overwhelming weight of self-delight (and his eventually overwhelming weight), Welles was a real genius. There but for the grace of God goes God.

HOWARD HAWKS (1896–1977)

Hawks said it's easy, cool, dreamy—you just make elegant fantasies for the folks. For two hours they live in a dream, but the dream is hard-boiled, wisecracking, tough. Hard and soft—you have it both ways. How easy? He could do comedy, Westerns, musicals, screwball, film noir, war. What do you need? Edgy guys and fresh dames: Wayne, Grant, Bogey, Cooper, Cagney, with Bacall, Dickinson, Lombard, Hepburn, Hayworth. The



Alfred Hitchcock

rules: never cry, never sweat, never get an Oscar, never go stale. Hawks is still so fresh, you can't keep up.

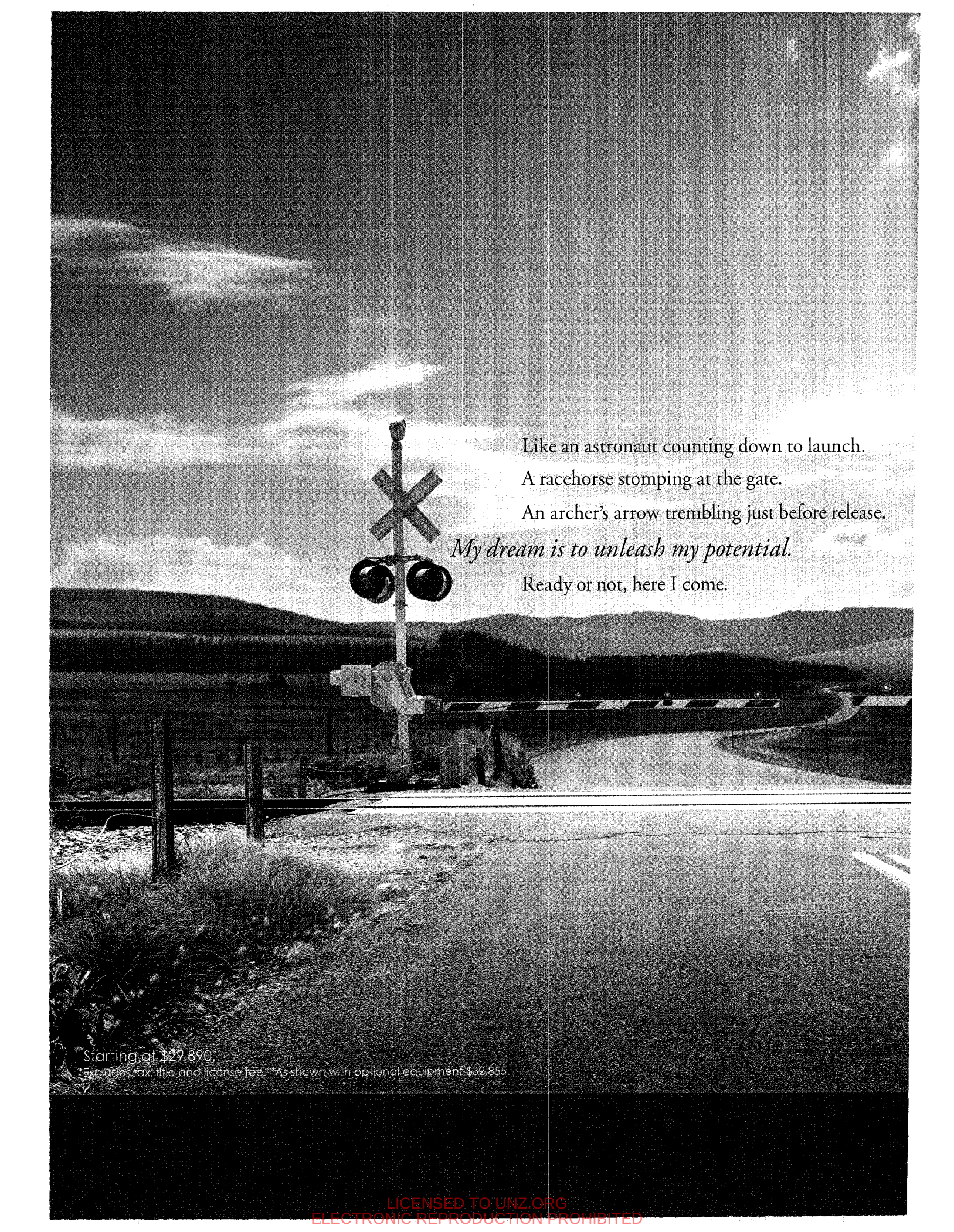
ALFRED HITCHCOCK (1899–1980)

Alfred Hitchcock combined Griffith's suspense with Hawks's fantasy, and found voyeurism (we watch, can't help it, but we feel guilty). His plan: put the audience through it. Make suspense so acute—so storyboarded, so camera angled, so full of piercing sounds—that we're jumping out of our seats. He began with crime stories (which character is guilty?), then moved on to parables (is the audience guilty?). He made films in his head before shooting, thus stressing the power of the director. Beloved by the French, the auteur theorists, and all would-be tyrants, Hitchcock eventually edged over into horror—see the move from *Vertigo* to *Psycho*—and introduced the challenge that led to film's decline: Can you keep your eyes open if I show you *this*?

ANDY WARHOL (1928–1987)

Warhol made the great deadpan eye-ronic thought bubble of the '60s—just in time to ruin film theory and film crit, but not soon enough to slow film's march into academia. Film is stupid. Anyone can do it. Turn the camera on and go to lunch. Find depraved versions of beautiful people. Have them take clothes off and improvise. Call them stars. He screwed the camera back to the floor—as in the 1900s—and took no interest in the result, but called it "A film by Andy Warhol." His basic rules: if the exposure came out OK, they will watch; if they are arguing over what it means, it's a movie.

David Thomson is the author of The New Biographical Dictionary of Film. His most recent book is Nicole Kidman (Knopf).



Like an astronaut counting down to launch.

A racehorse stomping at the gate.

An archer's arrow trembling just before release.

My dream is to unleash my potential.

Ready or not, here I come.

Starting at \$29,890.

*Excludes tax, title and license fee. **As shown with optional equipment \$32,855.



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There was no wind today,
but the kite flew higher than ever.

Of course, the look on my daughter's face sent me soaring as well.

My dream is to be a hero.

Only, who knew it would be through the eyes of a six-year-old.

Starting at \$34,795.

Tax, title and license fees extra. As shown with optional equipment, MSRP \$36,690.

*Wind diffuser with available Vista Roof not shown. Do not put objects through roof.



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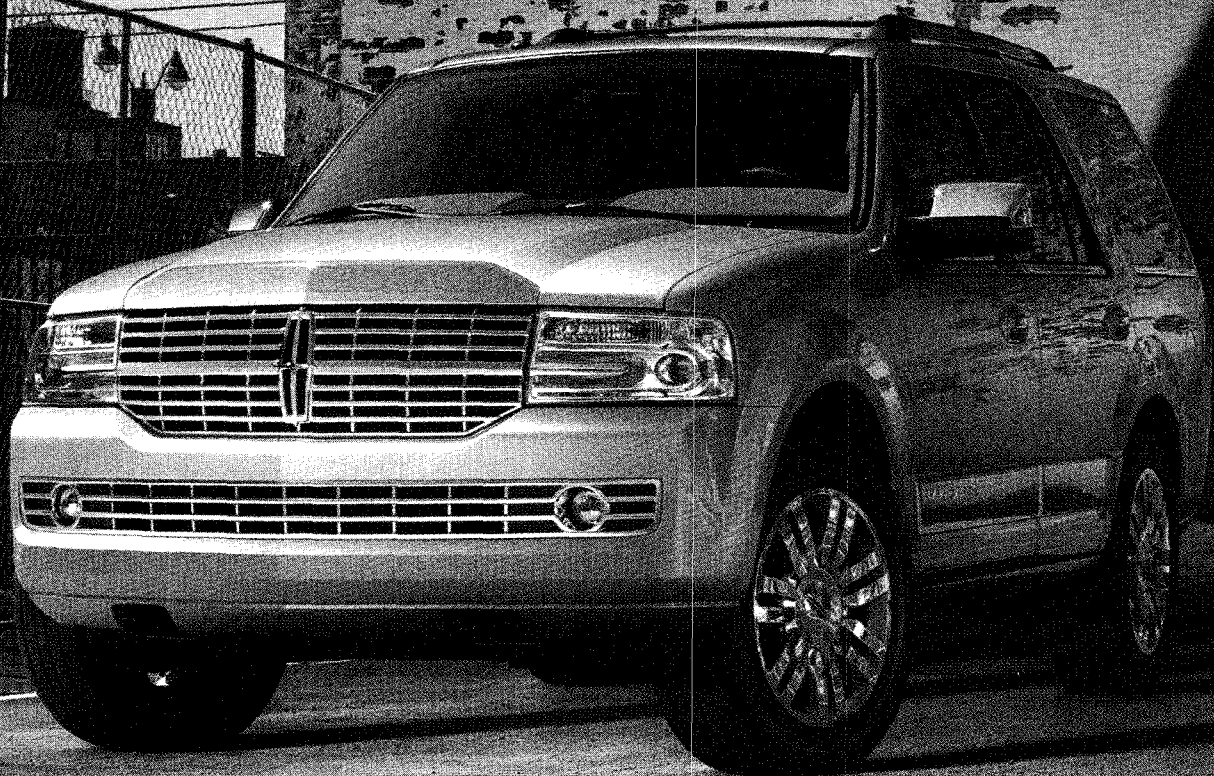
We never had much, just a ball and a dream.

And the ball was the easy part.

Now I plan on making that second part easier for the next generation.

My dream is to give back.

I can't wait to get started.



*Available features. Based on full-size luxury SUV 2006-2007 class competition.



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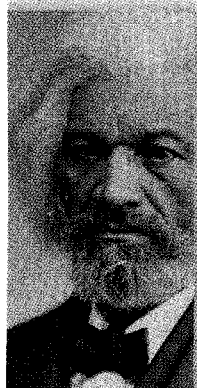
43 W.E.B. DuBOIS
One of America's great intellectuals, he made the "problem of the color line" his life's work.

44 LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON
His brilliance gave us civil-rights laws; his stubbornness gave us Vietnam.

45 SAMUEL F. B. MORSE
Before the Internet, there was Morse code.



46 WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON
Through his newspaper, *The Liberator*, he became the voice of abolition.



47 FREDERICK DOUGLASS
After escaping from slavery, he pricked the nation's conscience with an eloquent accounting of its crimes.

48 ROBERT OPPENHEIMER
The father of the atomic bomb and the regretful midwife of the nuclear era.

49 FREDERICK LAW OLMTED
The genius behind New York's Central Park, he inspired the greening of America's cities.

50 JAMES K. POLK
This one-term president's Mexican War landgrab gave us California, Texas, and the Southwest.

51 MARGARET SANGER
The ardent champion of birth control—and of the sexual freedom that came with it.



52 JOSEPH SMITH
The founder of Mormonism, America's most famous homegrown faith.



53 OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES JR.
Known as "The Great Dissenter," he wrote Supreme Court opinions that continue to shape American jurisprudence.

TOP LIVING INFLUENTIALS

Living Americans who received votes from panelists

1. Bill Gates (No. 54 on the Top 100)

2. James D. Watson (No. 68)

3. Ralph Nader (No. 96)

4. Bob Dylan

5. Steve Jobs

6. Steven Spielberg

7. William F. Buckley Jr.

8. Muhammad Ali

9. Sandra Day O'Connor

10. Oprah Winfrey

11. Billy Graham

12. George Lucas

13. Norman Borlaug (founder of the "Green Revolution")

14. Michael Jordan

15. Shirley Temple

16. Walter Cronkite

17. Gloria Steinem

18. Phyllis Schlafly

19. Norman Mailer

20. Sid Caesar (the soul of Borscht Belt comedy)

21–24. Vinton Cerf, Robert E. Kahn, Leonard Kleinrock, Lawrence Roberts (the four "fathers of the Internet")

25. Helen Gurley Brown (legendary editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine; author of *Sex and the Single Girl*)

26. Stan Lee (founder of Marvel Comics; inventor of Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk, the Fantastic Four, and other superheroes)

26. Bill Cosby (tied)

28. Henry Kissinger

28. Chuck Berry (tied)

28. Bill Clinton (tied)

31. Martha Stewart

31. Clint Eastwood (tied)

33. Tiger Woods

33. Hugh Hefner (tied)

journalists, and essayists, two of them (James Fenimore Cooper and Harriet Beecher Stowe) are true museum pieces, while many of the rest—Ralph Waldo Emerson (33) and Henry David Thoreau (65), William Faulkner (60) and William James (62)—wrote strictly highbrow fare. (On the other hand, as Gordon S. Wood points out, no historians made the list—leading him to remark, "I guess we don't think what we do is very influential")

What about collaboration? Apart from joined-at-the-hip pairs like the Wright Brothers (23) and Lewis and Clark (70), the panelists found no obvious way to recognize collaborative influences. This may help explain why no woman ended up closer to the top of the ranking—because some panelists put Susan B. Anthony (38) higher and others Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and there was no way to rate the cumulative effect of the great feminists' efforts.

Still, famous collaborations show up on the final list, if you know where to

look. As noted above, present-at-the-creation Mormons Joseph Smith and Brigham Young both make an appearance; so do atomic-bomb coworkers Albert Einstein (32), Robert Oppenheimer (48), and Enrico Fermi (88). Likewise the collaborators behind America's founding—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson (3), Benjamin Franklin (6), John Marshall (7), James Madison (13), and John Adams (25)—all appear near the top. They are joined by Thomas Paine (19), the prophet of the American Revolution. (H.W. Brands dissented on this one: "Paine articulated something that was in the air," he allowed, but the Revolution "was going to happen anyway.")

The list is heavily weighted toward the not-so-recent past. Only three living Americans—Bill Gates, Ralph Nader (96), and James D. Watson (68), a codiscoverer of the double helix—made the list, and of the Top 100, sixty-seven died before 1950. The only significant

figures from the post-'60s era to crack the top twenty were Nader and Reagan, and in general the list reflects what David M. Kennedy calls an instinctive caution about "canonizing anyone who's among the quick," or recently deceased. "It's hard to judge the present," John Steele Gordon points out. "We aren't able to say who *will* be influential." And Robert Dallek notes that even Reagan, seemingly as sure a bet as recent history offers, may not loom so large in fifty years, once all of his administration's records have been opened to historians.

So if this exercise were to be carried out again in half a century, presumably it would show a stronger consensus about what mattered in our own era and what didn't. This might mean a place for Sandra Day O'Connor and Hillary Clinton, for instance, or even Oprah Winfrey and Martha Stewart, both of whom received votes. ("One would hope that a hundred years from now there will be more women at the top than there are now, looking back," Doris Kearns Goodwin said.) Bob Dylan, who fell just short of the Top 100 in this balloting, might slip in; so might Steve Jobs, once the impact of the Internet age extends over half a century.

The panelists *did* vote for many twentieth-century figures—as well as many athletes and jazz musicians, visual artists and religious innovators. All told, the ten historians suggested 322 influentials; there just wasn't as much consensus on the recent and nonpolitical choices as there was on Gilded Age industrialists and Founding Fathers. But for every vote cast for a mutton-chopped Victorian, at least one went to Stan Lee or Marilyn Monroe, B. F. Skinner or Tiger Woods. Which is why the most interesting part of the voting may be the fascinating figures lurking in the lower reaches of the balloting.

Take America's religious leaders—represented on the list by Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, Mary Baker Eddy, Jonathan Edwards (90), and the Presbyterian clergyman Lyman Beecher (91), as well as a number of ministers best known for their efforts at political reform, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the abolitionist William

JERRY SCHATZBERG/CORBIS

AN EXPERT'S OPINION

INFLUENTIAL MUSICIANS

BY TERRY TEACHOUT

LOUIS ARMSTRONG (1901–1971)

"Satchmo" (as he loved to be called) didn't invent jazz, but it might have sounded unimaginably different without him. The bastard son of a sometime prostitute, Armstrong learned to play cornet in a New Orleans home for "colored waifs." Having mastered the ensemble style of early jazz, he reshaped it in his own expansive image, shifting the emphasis from group improvisation to the virtuoso solo. No less significant were his genial, gravel-voiced vocals, which laid the foundation for all subsequent pop singing. Bing Crosby called him "the beginning and end of music in America."

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

Of all the inspired artists who created what is now called the Great American Songbook, it was Gershwin who did the most to infuse it with the quintessentially American sounds of ragtime and jazz. Working in tandem with his brother and lyricist Ira, he galvanized Broadway (and, later, Hollywood) with soon-to-be-standards like "I Got Rhythm" and "Someone to Watch Over Me." At the same time, he produced a series of pop-flavored concert works, starting with *Rhapsody in Blue*, in which he pioneered the crossover genre, and in *Porgy and Bess* he tore down the wall that had separated opera from musical comedy.

AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)

Before Copland came along, American classical musicians were struggling to forge their own distinctive stylistic identity. Attracted by the spare lucidity of Igor Stravinsky's neoclassicism, the open-eared experimental approach of Charles Ives, and the off-center rhythms of jazz, Copland turned his back on nineteenth-century European Romanticism and replaced it with a spaciouly lyrical, rhythmically vital style that at once evoked the hum and buzz of urban life and the wide-open expanses of the prairie. In such ballet scores as *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, he all but single-handedly invented the sound of modern American classical music.



Bob Dylan

ELVIS PRESLEY (1935–1977)

By fusing black rhythm and blues with white country (his first single had an R&B song on one side and a bluegrass tune on the other), Presley became the central figure in the great transformation that replaced Gershwin-style pop songs with rock and roll as the lingua franca of American popular music. Though he degenerated over time into the drug-sodden, chronically obese "fat Elvis" of countless cruel jokes, his sex-charged TV appearances and films of the '50s made him the No. 1 teen idol of the buttoned-down Eisenhower era, and he set a benchmark for renown that today's rock stars still strive to surpass.

BOB DYLAN (1941–)

American folk music was enjoying a short-lived spurt of popularity in the early 1960s when Dylan first emerged as a top protest singer with "Blowin' in the Wind" and "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Then he stunned his contemporaries by unexpectedly retrofitting himself as a hard-charging electric rocker whose lyrics were complex and ambiguous to a degree previously unknown in American popular song. Nor was this the only stylistic rabbit Dylan pulled out of his hat: he later embraced country music on his albums *John Wesley Harding* and *Nashville Skyline*. No one has done more to define the place of the singer-songwriter in contemporary pop.

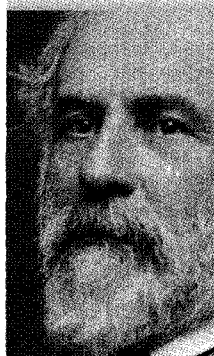
Terry Teachout, the drama critic of The Wall Street Journal and the music critic of Commentary, is writing Hotter Than That: A Life of Louis Armstrong.



54 BILL GATES
The Rockefeller of the Information Age, in business and philanthropy alike.

55 JOHN QUINCY ADAMS
The Monroe Doctrine's real author, he set nineteenth-century America's diplomatic course.

56 HORACE MANN
His tireless advocacy of universal public schooling earned him the title "The Father of American Education."



57 ROBERT E. LEE
He was a good general but a better symbol, embodying conciliation in defeat.

58 JOHN C. CALHOUN
The voice of the antebellum South, he was slavery's most ardent defender.

59 LOUIS SULLIVAN
The father of architectural modernism, he shaped the defining American building: the skyscraper.

60 WILLIAM FAULKNER
The most gifted chronicler of America's tormented and fascinating South.

61 SAMUEL GOMPERS
The country's greatest labor organizer, he made the golden age of unions possible.



62 WILLIAM JAMES
The mind behind Pragmatism, America's most important philosophical school.



63 GEORGE MARSHALL
As a general, he organized the American effort in World War II; as a statesman, he rebuilt Western Europe.

64 JANE ADDAMS
The founder of Hull House, she became the secular saint of social work.

65 HENRY DAVID THOREAU
The original American dropout, he has inspired seekers of authenticity for 150 years.

66 ELVIS PRESLEY
The king of rock and roll. Enough said.

67 P. T. BARNUM
The circus impresario's taste for spectacle paved the way for blockbuster movies and reality TV.



68 JAMES D. WATSON
He codiscovered DNA's double helix, revealing the code of life to scientists and entrepreneurs alike.



69 JAMES GORDON BENNETT
As the founding publisher of *The New York Herald*, he invented the modern American newspaper.

70 LEWIS AND CLARK
They went west to explore, and millions followed in their wake.

71 NOAH WEBSTER
He didn't create American English, but his dictionary defined it.

72 SAM WALTON
He promised us "Every Day Low Prices," and we took him up on the offer.

73 CYRUS McCORMICK
His mechanical reaper spelled the end of traditional farming, and the beginning of industrial agriculture.



74 BRIGHAM YOUNG
What Joseph Smith founded, Young preserved, leading the Mormons to their promised land.

75 GEORGE HERMAN "BABE" RUTH
He saved the national pastime in the wake of the Black Sox scandal—and permanently linked sports and celebrity.

76 FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
America's most significant architect, he was the archetype of the visionary artist at odds with capitalism.



Lloyd Garrison (46). Worthies all, but you have to look farther down the winners' list to find the people who actually built the churches where most of today's Americans worship. Several Jews are in the Top 100, but the only rabbi to receive votes was Solomon Schechter, the architect of Conservative Judaism. The only Top 100 Catholics are George Herman "Babe" Ruth, Louis Armstrong, and James Gordon Bennett (69), the great nineteenth-century newspaperman; two panelists, however, suggested John Carroll, the nation's first Catholic bishop. There were also two votes for Fulton Sheen, another Catholic bishop, whose 1950s media ministry, as Mark Noll put it, "certified Roman Catholicism as a benign religious, political, and cultural influence" (and made him a trailblazer for today's rather-less-eloquent crop of televangelists).

Also falling short of the Top 100 were the architects of American evangelicalism, the most successful species of Protestantism in this largely Protestant nation. Two panelists listed Francis Asbury, the eighteenth-century Methodist bishop whose indefatigable missionary efforts created a model of entrepreneurial religion that successful evangelical pastors have followed ever since. The aptly named Evangeline Booth, the first female "general" of the Salvation Army, received one vote, as did Dwight L. Moody, arguably the nineteenth century's most famous evangelist; two votes went to Billy Graham, the twentieth-century heir to that title.

Another Noll pick, William Seymour, is perhaps more obscure than the other religious figures in the Top 100, but in the long run may prove more influential than any of them. The son of freed slaves, Seymour in 1906 lost his job as pastor of a Los Angeles church over his belief that glossolalia—speaking in tongues—was available to contemporary Christians; undeterred, he set up shop in a ramshackle building on L.A.'s Azusa Street, and thus touched off the "Azusa Street Revival," the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement. Today, Pentecostalism is the fastest-growing form of Christianity in the world.

Interesting business figures also surface farther down in the list. The most

famous Victorian captains of industry—John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie (20), and J. P. Morgan (37)—made the Top 100, as did Sam Walton, Bill Gates, and Henry Ford (14), three figures familiar to any late-twentieth-century consumer. But why don't we remember other vote getters like Edwin Drake, the first businessman to suggest that prospectors consider drilling to find oil? Or Cyrus Field, who laid the first successful transatlantic cable, in 1858? Or Peter Cooper, an iron-and-steel magnate who—among his many accomplishments—invested in Field's cable, developed the first steam-powered locomotive, ran for president, founded the Cooper Union, and patented Jell-O?

Then there are America's inventors. Thomas Edison (9) earned votes from every panelist, but only John Steele Gordon voted for Nikola Tesla, the Croatian-born developer of the alternating-current approach to electricity, which won out over Edison's direct current. ("Every time we turn on a light switch," Gordon says, "we feel Tesla's influence.") Cyrus McCormick (73), whose mechanical reaper revolutionized American agriculture, made the Top 100. But why not Willis Carrier, the New Englander who developed air conditioning and thus changed forever the lives of Americans from Atlanta to Albuquerque? Before Carrier, H. W. Brands points out (from his air-conditioned Texas office), Dixie was terra incognita for most businesses, because "you couldn't expect people to accept transfers" south of the Mason-Dixon Line. William Faulkner made the list for immortalizing the humid, tormented Old Confederacy; surely Carrier deserves credit for creating the brassy, air-conditioned New South.

If Carrier's air conditioning built Atlanta, what about DeWitt Clinton's canal? Dubbed "Clinton's Ditch," the Erie Canal channeled a nation's commerce through Albany to New York City. "Stand on the corner of 42nd Street and look around," says Gordon. "Clinton gave us this."

Then there's Frances Perkins, one of Ellen Fitzpatrick's picks, whose monument is the payroll deduction found on every American paystub. As secretary of labor for Franklin Delano Roosevelt

AN EXPERT'S OPINION

INFLUENTIAL POETS

BY CHRISTIAN WIMAN

WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

The most influential American poet, beyond question. He was our first memoirist, our earliest Oprah (himself his only guest), our great prophet of the self. You can lay a lot of dreck at Whitman's door, but his spirit is so large, his voice still so vital, that it's impossible to think of him as anything but a powerful positive influence. No poet ever worked harder to project himself into the future, and no poet has ever been more successful. Many quintessentially American qualities—individualism, optimism, pluralism—find their best expression in Whitman's poetry, and even those of us who have never read him are influenced by him.

T. S. ELIOT (1888–1965)

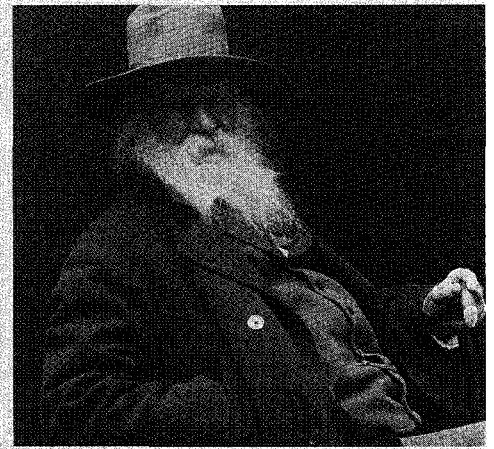
He wrenched poetry into the twentieth century and gave an entire era a language for its anxieties. His influence is on the wane among poets, or at least in a lull, which is unfortunate. Eliot's work remains a great model for how to root real innovation and experimentation in a living tradition. It is also a reminder of the enduring pleasures of sound in poetry. But Eliot can't vanish; his work, like Whitman's, has entered the culture. We read him even when we don't.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS (1883–1963)

Williams thought Eliot was a disaster for American poetry and publicly attacked "The Waste Land." He lost that battle but won the war. The next time you read a contemporary poem that is dominated by simple visual description, devoid of rhyme or meter, and suspiciously close to a basic prose paragraph broken up into lines, you are tasting the fruit of Williams's influence. A good poet (though not a great one), Williams isn't responsible for the blight of bad poetry that has followed him—but it's hard not to blame him just a little.

WALLACE STEVENS (1879–1955)

As poetry retreated into the academy, Stevens emerged as the dominant figure of the twentieth century. His influence is at once very deep and very narrow. Scholars and poets know his work inside out, but many educated people haven't



Walt Whitman



Sylvia Plath

even heard of him. The poems are dense, highly wrought, and full of otherworldly beauty—a necessary corrective to the Williams-esque plain style. But his work also has a hothouse, overintellectualized quality, which has endeared it to the academy and which contemporary poets would do well to purge.

SYLVIA PLATH (1932–1963)

Plath was Robert Lowell's student. Her achievement, though astonishing for someone who died at thirty, is not comparable to his, but for the past fifty years her work has had more influence. She's been a feminist icon, the high priestess of Confessionalism, and the required graveside reading for millions of undergraduate existentialists. Her overall influence has been terrible, promoting a kind of narcissistic despair that persists in many poems, novels, and movies today. That her work has survived all this ancillary frenzy, that it remains strange and original and troubling, is a testament to how good it really is.

Christian Wiman is the editor of Poetry magazine. His most recent book is Hard Night.

77 BETTY FRIEDAN
She spoke to the discontent of housewives everywhere—and inspired a revolution in gender roles.



78 JOHN BROWN
Whether a hero, a fanatic, or both, he provided the spark for the Civil War.

79 LOUIS ARMSTRONG
His talent and charisma took jazz from the cathouses of Storyville to Broadway, television, and beyond.

80 WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST
The press baron who perfected yellow journalism and helped start the Spanish-American War.



81 MARGARET MEAD
With *Coming of Age in Samoa*, she made anthropology relevant—and controversial.

82 GEORGE GALLUP
He asked Americans what they thought, and the politicians listened.

83 JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
The novels are unreadable, but he was the first great mythologizer of the frontier.



84 THURGOOD MARSHALL
As a lawyer and a Supreme Court justice, he was the legal architect of the civil-rights revolution.

85 ERNEST HEMINGWAY
His spare style defined American modernism, and his life made machismo a cliché.

86 MARY BAKER EDDY
She got off her sickbed and founded Christian Science, which promised spiritual healing to all.

87 BENJAMIN SPOCK
With a single book—and a singular approach—he changed American parenting.

88 ENRICO FERMI
A giant of physics, he helped develop quantum theory and was instrumental in building the atomic bomb.

(4), she midwived Social Security into the world. The retirement program outlived her, and seems likely to also outlive William F. Buckley Jr. (another Fitzpatrick pick), despite his best efforts to eradicate it.

But it may not outlive the influence of another female pioneer: Julia Child, who was picked by Joyce Appleby, John Steele Gordon, and Gordon S. Wood, and whose fingerprints, in grease or flour, are smeared over every aspect of our culinary culture, from Emeril Lagasse to Whole Foods. (Wood, for one, expressed

surprise that someone like Walter Lippmann [89] would be deemed more influential than Child.)

Similarly, as long as there are self-help books and motivational speakers, America will feel the influence of Dale Carnegie, a Robert Dallek pick and the author of 1938's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. And as long as there are Hollywood blockbusters, Americans will owe their summer entertainment—enjoyed in the cool of Willis Carrier's air conditioning—to Steven Spielberg (who received three votes,

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

JOYCE APPLEBY

Joyce Appleby is a professor emerita of history at the University of California at Los Angeles and a past president of the American Historical Association. Her works include *Thomas Jefferson*; *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*; and *A Restless Past: History and the American Public*, a collection of essays and addresses published last year.

H. W. BRANDS

H. W. Brands is the Dickson, Allen, Anderson Centennial Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin. He has written biographies of Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Roosevelt, and Andrew Jackson, and his most recent book is *The Money Men: Capitalism, Democracy, and the Hundred Years' War Over the American Dollar*.

ROBERT DALLEK

Robert Dallek is the author of *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, which won the Bancroft Prize; a two-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson; and *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963*. This spring, HarperCollins will publish his new book, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power*.

ELLEN FITZPATRICK

Ellen Fitzpatrick is the Carpenter Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire. Her works include *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880–1980* and *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform*.

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN

Doris Kearns Goodwin won the Pulitzer Prize for *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*. She is also the author of *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*; *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*; and most recently *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, which won the Lincoln Prize.

JOHN STEELE GORDON

John Steele Gordon is the author of *Hamilton's Blessing: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Our National Debt* and *The Great Game: The Emergence of Wall Street as a World Power, 1653–2000*. His most recent book is *An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power*.

DAVID M. KENNEDY

David M. Kennedy is a professor of history at Stanford University and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945*. He won the Bancroft Prize for *Birth Control in America: The Career of Margaret Sanger*.

WALTER McDUGALL

Walter McDougall is a professor of history and international relations at the University of Pennsylvania. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age*. His other works include *Promised Land*, *Crusader State: The American Encounter With the World Since 1776*; *Let the Sea Make a Noise: A History of the North Pacific From Magellan to MacArthur*; and most recently *Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History, 1585–1828*.

MARK NOLL

Mark Noll is the McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. His works include *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*; *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*; and *America's God, From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*.

GORDON S. WOOD

Gordon S. Wood is the Alva O. Way University Professor and a professor of history at Brown University. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* and the Bancroft Prize for *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787*. His latest book is *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different*.

from Brands, Goodwin, and Gordon) and George Lucas (two votes, from Wood and McDougall).

Finally, some of these figures touch our present era only indirectly, but dominated an earlier one. The Top 100 includes Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Betty Friedan, all of whom insisted that a woman's place was in the voting booth and the workplace as well as in the home. But while they won the argument in the end, for a long time other influences put that outcome in doubt. Walter McDougall's list, for instance, includes the nearly forgotten Sarah Josepha Hale. A nineteenth-century journalist, Hale edited the popular women's magazine *Godey's Lady's Book* from 1837 to 1877, and used its pages to promote an ideal of domestic goddesshood that eclipsed the feminist vision of women's place for decades.

McDougall also picked William Holmes McGuffey, the Presbyterian minister responsible for the McGuffey Readers. These books helped make Americans almost universally literate; and by emphasizing patriotism and hard work, political equality and Protestant faith, they taught their pupils to *be* Americans. But their day passed, and what was once a defining text of public education persists only because it's marketed to people who opt out—to Christian homeschoolers, for instance, who prefer McGuffey's mix of righteousness and rigor to the more latitudinarian texts that have replaced his.

Influence can be deep and yet ultimately ephemeral; our list reflects, as Robert Dallek put it, the "cruelty of historical memory." But if the fate of the McGuffey Readers and *Godey's Lady's Book* speaks to the impermanence of influence, much of the list speaks to its contingency as well.

Take Harry Truman (21), the man who dropped the atomic bomb and created the Truman Doctrine. Surely the hot-tempered little haberdasher meets Gordon S. Wood's criterion of a "peculiar personality" ideally suited to a historical moment. Yet his moment chose him only at the last minute, as a replacement for Henry Wallace, the left-wing former commerce secretary who was

AN EXPERT'S OPINION

INFLUENTIAL CRITICS

BY ROBERT MESSENGER

BERNARD BERENSON (1865–1959)

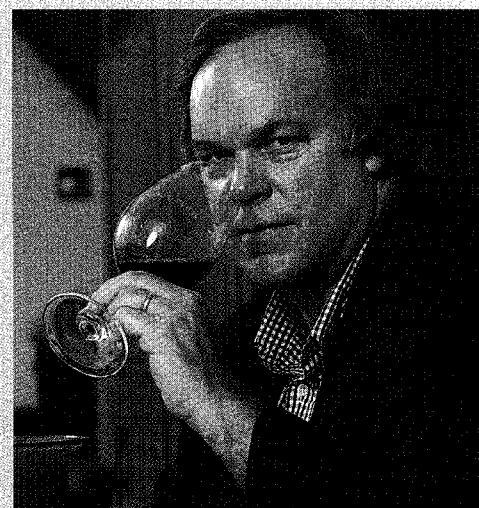
When Berenson went to Europe in 1887, there were no notable American art collections. It was his work of attribution and connoisseurship—and the critical volumes he produced—that led the Gilded Age's robber barons to buy Renaissance art and build America's great public museums. Berenson practiced criticism at its most advanced, using eyes, brain, and memory to organize and elucidate the remains of a culture—in his case, determining who had painted the surviving works of the Italian *tercento* and *quattrocento*. Though he has been derided for his commercial dealings, his work is still among the few towering American intellectual achievements.

CLEMENT GREENBERG (1909–1994)

Greenberg's *Art and Culture* is the best book of art criticism ever written by an American; the prose has a knock-down power that hasn't diminished over a half century. What counts in the influence race, though, is that by 1943, Greenberg had already recognized David Smith and Jackson Pollock as world-class artists. He grasped that abstract art was the dominant mode, and he had the critical eye and intellect to distinguish the greater artists from the lesser. He cajoled, encouraged, learned from, fought with, and critiqued the generation of painters that brought American visual arts into the big time. When you see a de Kooning or a Gorky, a Noland or a Frankenthaler at the museum, you're under Greenberg's influence.

JOHN HAMMOND (1910–1987)

Hammond—whose work as a jazz critic for *The Nation*, *Gramophone*, *Melody Maker*, and the *Brooklyn Eagle* expanded into work as a promoter and producer—was the impresario of jazz. He recorded the last sides of Bessie Smith and the first ones of Billie Holiday. He got Benny Goodman to take up swing—and introduced Lionel Hampton, Charlie Christian, and Teddy Wilson to Goodman's band—and made Count Basie a national star. While his jazz writings may not have the legs of the work of Leonard Feather, Otis Ferguson, and Gary Giddins, Hammond was largely



Robert M. Parker Jr.

responsible for moving jazz into the American mainstream.

RANDALL JARRELL (1914–1965)

Randall Jarrell was part of our greatest age of criticism: the age of Eliot, Richards, Warren, Blackmur, Tate, Brooks, Ransom. Even in such august company, he is notable for his combination of acumen and eloquence—and his sensitivity to the difficulty of writing even good poetry. He's read today mostly for his sparkling invective—"It is better to entertain an idea than to take it home to live with you for the rest of your life"—but his influence is evident in every poetry anthology. Jarrell decided much that we now think of as obvious. He pushed Robert Lowell as the poet of his generation, and he insisted on Elizabeth Bishop's importance; he saw past Robert Frost's country-spun persona and elucidated the dark and stirring depths of the verse. His essays, moreover, address all the concerns of contemporary poets. They ought to listen to him more.

ROBERT M. PARKER JR. (1947–)

No critic in history has ever wielded as much influence as Robert Parker. His ratings send customers scurrying to wineries and drive prices skyward. Wines are being made on five continents to suit his preferences. With his exceptional palate and Nader-like devotion to the consumer, he revolutionized an industry that was dominated by insiders, obfuscation, and hyperbole twenty years ago. He's been attacked from all sides, but it is hard not to admire his consistency and his independence.

Robert Messenger is an Atlantic deputy managing editor.

89 WALTER LIPPMANN
The last man who could swing an election with a newspaper column.

90 JONATHAN EDWARDS
Forget the fire and brimstone: his subtle eloquence made him the country's most influential theologian.



91 LYMAN BEECHER
Harriet Beecher Stowe's clergyman father earned fame as an abolitionist and an evangelist.

92 JOHN STEINBECK
As the creator of Tom Joad, he chronicled Depression-era misery.

93 NAT TURNER
He was the most successful rebel slave; his specter would stalk the white South for a century.

94 GEORGE EASTMAN

The founder of Kodak democratized photography with his handy rolls of film.



95 SAM GOLDWYN
A producer for forty years, he was the first great Hollywood mogul.

96 RALPH NADER
He made the cars we drive safer; thirty years later, he made George W. Bush the president.

97 STEPHEN FOSTER
America's first great songwriter, he brought us "O! Susanna" and "My Old Kentucky Home."



98 BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
As an educator and a champion of self-help, he tried to lead black America up from slavery.

99 RICHARD NIXON
He broke the New Deal majority, and then broke his presidency on a scandal that still haunts America.

100 HERMAN MELVILLE
Moby Dick was a flop at the time, but Melville is remembered as the American Shakespeare.

FDR's vice president for most of World War II, and who was bumped from the ticket over concerns that he was too sympathetic to Joseph Stalin's Russia. Had Roosevelt's Warm Springs stroke come just a little sooner, Wallace might be on the list—remembered, most likely, as the man who misunderstood Moscow, given that two of his closest advisers were Soviet agents.

There are many of these "unfluentials"—figures who, but for chance or the grace of God, might have been influential rather than obscure, and who hang like shadows around their better-remembered counterparts. LBJ (44) is shadowed by JFK, who, though hardly obscure, earned the votes of only two panelists; without an assassin's bullet, it would have been Kennedy wrestling with civil rights and Vietnam, and Johnson fading into the obscurity reserved for elderly vice presidents. Theodore Roosevelt (15) is shadowed by William McKinley, similarly felled by an assassin (though one suspects that Roosevelt would have found his way to influence in any event); Abraham Lincoln by Jefferson Davis, almost remembered as the father of a different American republic; Ulysses S. Grant (12) and Robert E. Lee (57) by Stonewall Jackson, who might have won the war

for Davis had he lived past the Battle of Chancellorsville.

Even George Washington has his shadows: Benedict Arnold, who was a better general than the man from Mount Vernon but proved a greater fool; and Horatio Gates, the Revolutionary War general who, after his victory at Saratoga, was favored by some colonial officers as a replacement for Washington.

Those that future historians deem influential will doubtless have their shadows as well. If history ranks Bill Clinton an influential for the ages, it will be at the expense of other Great Democratic Hopes whom history will slight: Gary Hart, say, whose extramarital dalliance went unforgiven, or Mario Cuomo, who dithered in 1992 while Clinton seized the moment, and the presidency. If Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy's influence endures, it will be shadowed by the almost-influence of Robert Bork; likewise Samuel Alito and the shadow of Harriet Miers.

And if George W. Bush's imprint is still strongly felt in 2056, then Al Gore—a few Florida ballots (or one Supreme Court vote) short of the presidency—will be (barely) remembered for the influence he never had the chance to wield. ▀

Ross Douhat is an Atlantic associate editor.

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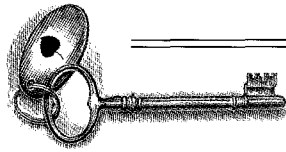
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How to Get a Nuclear BOMB

BY WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

Hiroshima was destroyed in a flash by a bomb dropped from a propeller-driven B-29 of the U.S. Army Air Force, on the warm morning of Monday, August 6, 1945. The bomb was not chemical, as bombs until then had been, but rather atomic, designed to release the energies Einstein described. It was a simple cannon-type device of the sort that today any number of people could build in a garage. It fell nose-down for forty-three seconds, and for maximum effect never hit the ground. One thousand nine hundred feet above the city the bomb fired a lump of highly enriched uranium down a steel tube into a receiving lump of the same refined material, creating a combined uranium mass of 133 pounds. In relation to its surface area, that mass was more than enough to achieve "criticality" and allow for an uncontrollable chain of fission reactions, during which neutrons collided with uranium nuclei, releasing further neutrons in a blossoming process of self-destruction. The reactions could be sustained for just a millisecond, and they fully exploited less than two pounds of the uranium before the resulting heat forced a halt to the process through expansion. Uranium is the heaviest element on earth, almost twice as heavy as lead, and two pounds of it amounts to only about three tablespoonsfuls. Nonetheless, the explosion over Hiroshima yielded a force equivalent to 15,000 tons (fifteen kilotons) of TNT, achieved temperatures higher than the sun's, and emitted light-speed pulses of dangerous radiation. More than 150,000 people died.

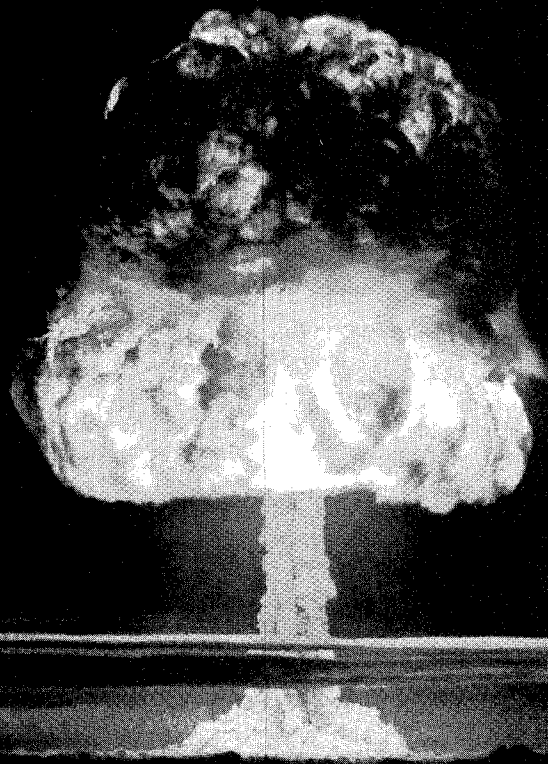
Three days later, the city of Nagasaki was hit by an even more powerful device—a sophisticated implosion-type bomb built around a softball-sized sphere of plutonium, which crossed the mass-to-surface-area threshold of criticality when it was symmetrically compressed by carefully arrayed explosives. A twenty-two-kiloton blast resulted. Though much of the city was shielded by hills, about 70,000 people died. Quibblers claim that a demonstration offshore,

or even above Tokyo harbor, might have induced the Japanese to surrender—and if not, there was another bomb at the ready. But the idea was to terrorize a nation to the maximum extent, and there is nothing like nuking civilians to achieve that effect.

The physicists who had developed these devices understood the potential for miniaturization and a simultaneous escalation in warhead yields, past the twenty-two kilotons of Nagasaki and indeed past a thousand kilotons, into the multimegaton range—the realm, when multiplied, of global suicide. Moreover, they realized that the science involved, however mysterious it seemed to outsiders, had already devolved into mere problems of engineering, the knowledge of which could not be contained. Within a few years humanity would face an objective risk of annihilation—a reality that compelled those who understood it best to go public with the facts. In the months following Japan's surrender, a group of the men responsible for building the bomb—including Albert Einstein, Robert Oppenheimer, Neils Bohr, and Leo Szilard—created the Federation of American (Atomic) Scientists (FAS), to disseminate nuclear-weapons information. Washington at the time harbored the illusion that America possessed a great secret, and could keep the bomb for itself to drop or not on others. The founders of FAS disagreed. The current vice president of its Strategic Security Project, an affable scientist named Ivan Oelrich, recently said to me, "The biggest secret about the atomic bomb was whether it would work or not." But after the United States exploded one, there was no longer any question in the minds of other countries. "They knew that if they did X, Y, and Z, they would have success. So in 1945 the scientists who founded this organization said, 'Look, there is no secret. Any physicist anywhere can figure out what we did and reproduce it. There is no secret, and there is also no defense.'"

William Langewiesche is Vanity Fair's international correspondent. His new book, The Atomic Bazaar, will be published in May by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

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Some of the solutions they proposed may seem quaint. Albert Einstein, for instance, called for the creation of an enlightened world government, complete with the integration of formerly hostile military staffs and the voluntary dismantling of sovereign states. But the founders of FAS were not naive so much as desperate and brave. They said, in essence, If you knew what we know about these devices, you would agree that at any price, the practice of war must end. It was a rare call for radical change by men at the top of their game. But history shows that the future is impossible to predict. There was no exception here. After sixty years there has been no apocalypse, and a nuclear peace has so far endured for all the wrong reasons—an unenlightened standoff between the nuclear powers, each of them restrained from shooting first not by moral qualms, but by the certainty of a devastating response. Moreover, the very lack of defense that worried the scientists in 1945 turned out to *be* the defense, though treacherous because it required tit-for-tat escalations. But these are latter-day corrections to the concerns of enormously competent men, and their message is equally valid today. Detailed knowledge of nuclear-bomb making has escaped into the public domain, and the use of even a single fission device could pose an existential threat to the West.

Last winter in Moscow I spoke to an experienced Cold War hand, who had skated through the collapse of the Soviet Union, and now occupied a high position in the nuclear bureaucracy of the increasingly assertive Russian state. In his corduroy suit, with his bushy eyebrows and heavy, sometimes glowering face, he looked like an apparatchik from central casting—and he acted like one, too. It was refreshing. He kept poking his finger at me, and accusing Americans of losing perspective over a nuclear Iran. He wanted to do nuclear business with Iran, in electric-power generation. He wanted to do nuclear business with all sorts of countries. He claimed that with one Russian submarine reactor (fueled by high-octane uranium) he could light up all sorts of cities. He meant with electricity. He proposed a scheme to mount such reactors on barges, to be pushed to places like Indonesia and then pulled away whenever the natives ran amok. This way, he said, he could keep his uranium from fueling native bombs. He did not deny the incentives for lesser nations to acquire nuclear devices, but he thought he could handle them, or perhaps he didn't care. He said, "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was the child of Russia and the United States. And this child was raised to fight against other countries, to resist the threat of proliferation. We're talking about the 1970s. No one thought that proliferation could come from Arab countries, from Africa, from South America. The treaty was aimed at Western Germany, at Japan. It was aimed at dissuading the developed countries from acquiring nuclear weapons—and it worked because they accepted the U.S. and Soviet nuclear umbrellas."

He was bullying history, but only by a bit. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, was an effort to preserve the exclusivity of a weapons club whose membership consisted originally of only five: Britain, China, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. To other countries the treaty

promised assistance with nuclear research and power generation in return for commitments to abstain from nuclear arms. It cannot be said to have "worked," as my Russian friend claimed, but it did help to slow things down. More important, and completely independent of the NPT, were the Cold War alliances that, by offering retaliatory guarantees, eliminated the need for independent nuclear defense capabilities in those nations willing (or forced) to choose sides. But neither the Cold War alliances nor the NPT could counter the natural appeal of these devices—their fast-track, nation-equalizing, don't-tread-on-me, flat-out-awesome destructive power.

In 1946 Robert Oppenheimer sketched the problem clearly. In an essay titled "The New Weapon," he wrote: "Atomic explosives vastly increase the power of destruction per dollar spent, per man-hour invested; they profoundly upset the precarious balance between the effort necessary to destroy and the extent of the destruction." Elaborating, he wrote,

None of these uncertainties can becloud the fact that it will cost enormously less to destroy a square mile with atomic weapons than with any weapons hitherto known to warfare. My own estimate is that the advent of such weapons will reduce the cost, certainly by more than a factor of ten, more probably by a factor of a hundred. In this respect only biological warfare would seem to offer competition for the evil that a dollar can do.

From his perch in Moscow my Russian friend had observed the effect of Oppenheimer's truths. Continuing with his story of the NPT, he said, "Even as the U.S. and Russia offered our nuclear umbrellas, everyone understood that the weapons could never be used, because of retaliation. For us they were not wealth—they were a burden. At the same time, nuclear technology was becoming even cheaper, more efficient, and it became available to many countries. It became a useful tool especially for weak countries to satisfy their ambitions without much expense. There are no technical barriers, and no barriers to the flow of information, that can prevent it. Once a country has made the decision to become a nuclear-weapons power, it will become one regardless of any guarantees. You needn't be rich. You needn't be technically developed. You can be Pakistan, Libya, North Korea, Iran. You can be ..." He searched for a country even more absurd in his estimation. He said, "You can be Hungary." Then he said, "At some point this change occurred. The great powers were stuck with arsenals they could not use. And nuclear weapons became the weapons of the poor."

It was a simplified view, but not entirely wrong. Certainly the argument can be made that only underdeveloped nations can now afford to use these weapons, not merely because the lives of their citizens seem to be expendable, but also because of the limitations of their nuclear arsenals, which mean that their warheads will incinerate just a few enemy cities, more or less locally, and will not likely frighten Russia and the United States into swapping strikes. The fate of the world is not at stake. Pakistan and India came close to a regional nuclear exchange in 2002, with little risk of igniting a global conflict.

The core of that story, however, is that each antagonist had its own cities to protect—particularly its own capital—and each therefore had good reasons for backing down. This was a demonstration rather than a proof, but of special interest because it involved a country as backward as Pakistan. It seems to indicate as a general rule that even a stunted state is deterred by the threat of retaliation, because so long as its leaders have a government, an infrastructure, and indeed a delineated nation (not to mention their individual lives of luxury), they provide rich targets to be smashed and burned in answer to any first strike. At this point it appears that simple calculations of self-preservation should keep fingers off the triggers even in Pyongyang and Tehran. So we should be safe, relatively—but perhaps we are not.

The danger comes from a direction unforeseen in 1945, that this technology might now pass into the hands of the new stateless guerrillas, the jihadists, who offer none of the targets that have underlain our nuclear peace—no permanent infrastructure, no capital city, no country called home. The nuclear threat posed by the jihadists first surfaced in the chaos of post-Soviet Russia in the 1990s, and took full form after the fall of the World Trade Center. With so little to fear of nuclear retaliation, and having already panicked the United States into historic policy blunders, these are the rare people in a position to act.

countries where less rigorous safeguards are in place, but no government handles its nuclear arsenal loosely, or would dare to create the impression that it is using surrogates to fight its nuclear wars. Even the military leaders of Pakistan, who have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to sell this technology, would balk at allowing a constructed device to escape—if only because of the certainty that this time they would be held to account. The same concerns would almost certainly restrain North Korea.

All this should give you pause long enough to take bearings. You would do well to distinguish between your needs and those of conventional proliferators. Fledgling nuclear-weapons states have little use for just one or two bombs. To assume a convincing posture of counterstrike and deterrence, or simply to exhibit nuclear muscle, they require a significant arsenal that can be renewed and improved and grown across time. This in turn requires that they build large-scale industrial facilities to produce warhead fuel, which cannot be purchased on the international black market in sufficient quantity to sustain a nuclear-weapons production line. Manufacturing high-quality fuel is the most difficult part of any nuclear program; the NPT is meant to interfere primarily at this stage. The construction of everything else is relatively easy.

You could hardly expect to set up the facilities to manufacture nuclear fuel. (Nor could you expect any state, whether

There is plenty of weapons-grade fissile material in the world today, and more is being produced all the time. Surely a terrorist could steal or buy enough for a single garage-made device.

If you were a terrorist and a bomb was your goal, how would you go about getting one? You could not bet on acquiring an existing weapon. These are held as critical national assets in fortified facilities guarded by elite troops, and they would be extremely difficult to get at, or to buy. Reports have suggested the contrary, particularly because of rumors about the penetration of organized crime into the Russian nuclear forces, and about portable satchel nukes, or “suitcase bombs,” which are said to have been built for the KGB in the late 1970s and 1980s, and then lost into the black market following the Soviet breakup. However, the existence of suitcase bombs has never been proved, and there has never been a single verified case, anywhere, of the theft of any sort of nuclear weapon. Thefts may nonetheless have occurred, but nuclear weapons require regular maintenance, and any still lingering on the market would likely have become duds. Conversely, because these time limitations are well known, the very lack of a terrorist nuclear strike thus far tends to indicate that nothing useful was ever stolen. Either way, even if the seller could provide a functioning device, nuclear weapons in Russia and other advanced states have sophisticated electronic locks that would defeat almost any attempt to trigger them. Of course you could look to

Pakistan or North Korea, to risk helping you here, either.) But you would have no need to do so. There is plenty of weapons-grade fissile material in the world today, and more is being produced all the time. Surely you could steal or buy the quantity necessary for a single garage-made device.

You would now need to decide what kind of fuel to pursue. There are really only two choices—plutonium or highly enriched uranium. Plutonium is a man-made element produced by uranium reactors. There are several forms of it, including one purpose-made for bombs. Armies favor plutonium because it can be made to go critical in very small quantities, thereby lending itself to the miniaturization of weapons. Miniaturization has obvious attractions, but it requires a level of engineering sophistication that lies beyond the capabilities of a small terrorist team. And miniaturization is not that important for your purposes. You can operate well enough with a car-sized device locked into a shipping container or loaded into a private airplane behind a couple of dedicated pilots. Furthermore, plutonium has some negatives for an operation like yours. It is not suited for use in a basic cannon-type bomb, and demands instead the explosive symmetry of a Nagasaki-style implosion device. Building an implosion device would introduce complexities you would be better

off avoiding, particularly without a place and the time to test the design. And plutonium is difficult to handle—sufficiently radioactive to require shielding, awkward to transport without setting off radiation detectors, and extremely dangerous even in minute quantities if it is breathed in, swallowed, or absorbed through a cut or open wound. There are plenty of people who would willingly die for the chance to nuke the United States, but within the limited pool of technicians who might join your effort, it would be impractical to expect so much. Plutonium might work as the pollutant spread by a dirty bomb, but for your project, plutonium is out.

The alternative is highly enriched uranium, or HEU, the variant of natural uranium that has been refined to contain artificially dense concentrations of the fissionable isotope U-235. Operationally it is wonderful material—the perfect fuel for a garage-made bomb. During processing, uranium takes the form of an invisible gas, a liquid, a powder, and finally a dull grey metal. It has approximately the toxicity of lead, and would sicken shop workers who happened to swallow traces of it or breathe in its dust, but otherwise it is not immediately dangerous, and indeed is so mildly radioactive that it can be picked up with bare hands and, when lightly shielded, taken past many radiation monitors without setting off alarms. As one physicist in Washington suggested to me, in small masses HEU is so benign that you could sleep with it under your pillow. He warned me, however, that you could not just pile it up in your bed, or anywhere else, because the atoms of U-235 occasionally split apart spontaneously, and in doing so fire off neutrons, which within a sufficient mass of material could split enough other atoms to cause a chain reaction. Such a reaction would not amount to a military-style nuclear explosion, but it could certainly take out a few city blocks.

I asked the physicist if he wasn't concerned about giving information to terrorists. He summoned his patience visibly and said, to paraphrase it, This is Boy Scout Nuclear Merit Badge stuff. We continued our discussion. He said that the critical mass of uranium is inversely proportional to the level of enrichment. At the low end of HEU, which is considered to be 20 percent enrichment, nearly a ton would have to be combined before a stockpile could spontaneously ignite. At the high end, which is the "weapons grade" enrichment of 90 percent or greater, about 100 pounds could do the trick. I mentioned that at whatever level of enrichment, the HEU that a terrorist could acquire would by definition be made of units each consisting of less than a critical mass. I asked the physicist to imagine that a terrorist had acquired two bricks of weapons-grade HEU, each weighing fifty pounds: how far apart would he have to keep them? He said that a yard would be enough. I had arrived in Washington from remote mountains along the Turkish border with Iran, where every night hundreds of pack horses are led across the line by Kurdish smugglers, carrying cheap fuel for Turkish cars and opium for the European heroin market. This is the Silk Road revived, and it is one of the prime potential routes for the movement of stolen uranium. With this in mind, I told the physicist I assumed from his measure that the two bricks could be slung on either side of a saddle.

He said, "One on each side should be all right ..." He hesitated. "But what is the moderating effect of a horse?"

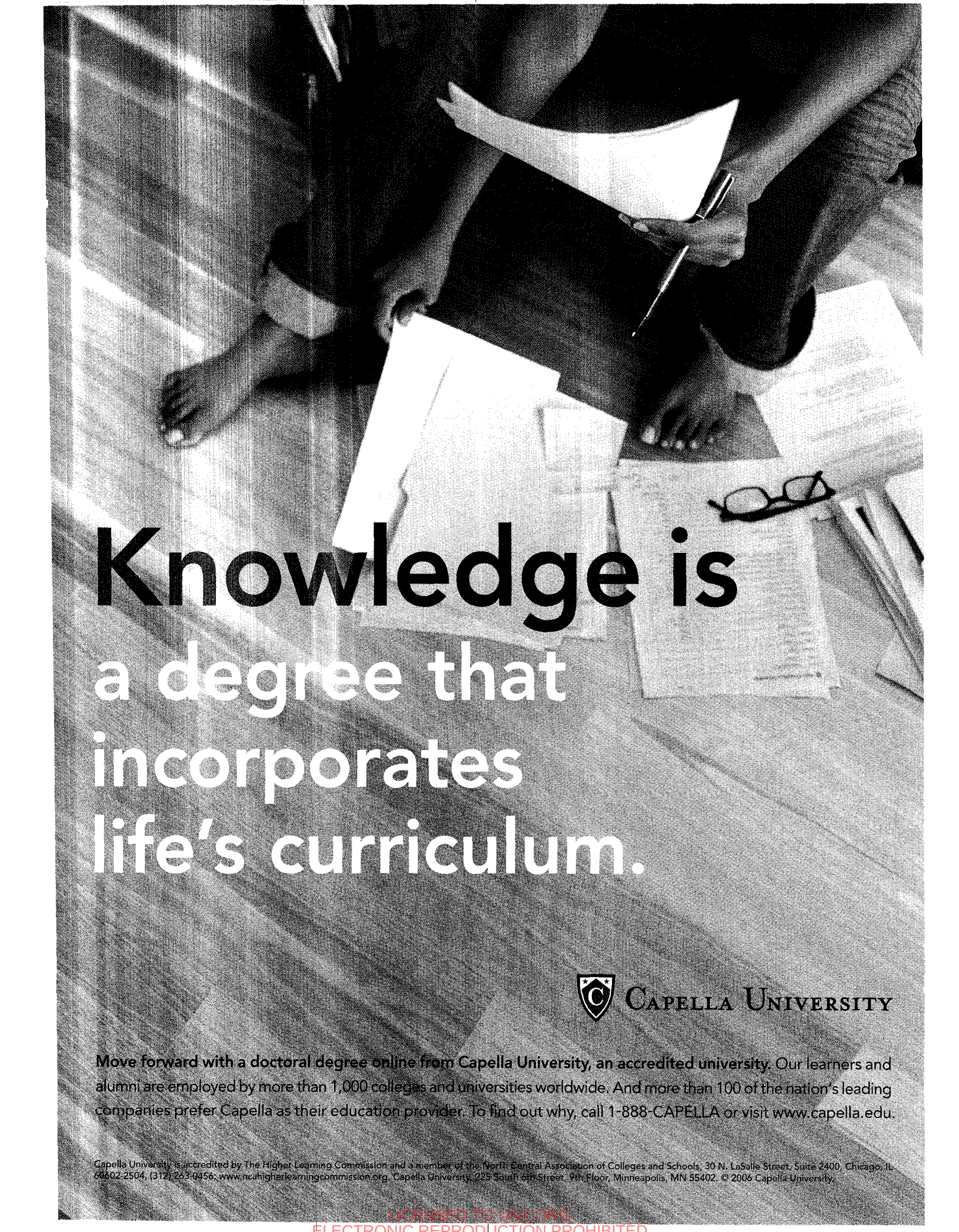
I had no idea. He said, "Look, if someone's smart enough to have snuck in and gotten ahold of these two ingots of metal, he'll be smart enough to negotiate for a second horse."

But you'd probably rather not have to sneak into anywhere, or negotiate for transport, or spend cold nights squatting with peasants and dodging border patrols. Every move in this venture, every elaboration, increases the chance for something to go wrong. Furthermore, to judge from the reports that have been written about a global black market in fissile materials, perhaps you could sit on the periphery—say in Istanbul—and with relatively little risk allow the uranium to come to you.

It is difficult to get a clear picture here. Turkey is the world's grand bazaar, and given its geographic position overlooking the Middle East, it is hardly surprising that people have gone looking to sell nuclear goods there. A University of Salzburg database (formerly run by Stanford) that purports to track smuggling activity globally since 1993 lists at least 20 incidents in the vicinity of Istanbul alone. But by including intercepts of all sorts of nuclear materials, that database (like most other treatments in this business) overstates the market's ability to answer a bomb-maker's needs. In fact, the marketplace—whether in Istanbul or anywhere else—seems never to have produced what you would require. The closest instance I found in the record dates from 1998, when agents from the Russian Federal Security Bureau (the former KGB, now called the FSB) arrested nuclear workers who were plotting to steal forty pounds of HEU. The enrichment level was never made public—an omission hinting that the uranium may well have been weapons grade. But even then it was less than half of what you would need.

Of course, we don't know what we don't know, as we are repetitively reminded. However, the other intercepts have been minor affairs of people caught filching or hawking scraps, often of material that doesn't pass even the 20 percent mark. For a serious bomb-builder, the reports of "loose nukes" would come to sound like so much background chatter. You will have to obtain the fissile material at the source. If you look through the literature, you'll soon realize that one of the challenges is the very extent of choices. It turns out that the world is rich with fresh, safe, user-friendly HEU—a global accumulation of over a thousand metric tons (outside of our collective 30,000 nuclear warheads) that is dispersed among hundreds of sites, and separated into nicely transportable, necessarily subcritical packages. The question is how to pick some up. Here again the literature can provide guidance. Although almost all of the HEU is in some manner guarded, there are many countries where it might nonetheless be acquired, and probably nowhere better than Russia.

When post-Soviet Russia came into being, in 1991, it inherited a sprawling state industry that had provided a full range of nuclear services, including medical science, power generation, and ship propulsion—as well as the world's largest nuclear-weapons arsenal and, almost coincidentally, the



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world's largest inventory of surplus plutonium and HEU, maybe 600 metric tons. The physical plant consisted of several dozen research, production, and storage facilities, and especially of ten fenced and guarded nuclear cities, which housed nearly a million people, yet were nominally so secret that they did not appear on maps. But within a few years the industry was obsolete, unable to adapt to the new Russian economy, and in steep decline. The buildings were in disrepair, and morale was low because people were not being paid enough or on time. Worse, the nuclear stockpiles were apparently being neglected. There were stories of guards abandoning their posts to forage for food, and of sheds containing world-ending supplies of HEU protected by padlock only. The question now, some fifteen years later, is why terrorists or criminals apparently did not then take advantage. One explanation is that they were ignorant, incompetent, and distracted. Another is that the defenses were not as weak as they appeared.

In any case, the U.S. government reacted rapidly to a perception of chaos and opportunity in post-Soviet nuclear affairs, and in 1993 launched an ambitious complex of "cooperative" programs with all the former Soviet states to lessen the chance that nuclear weapons might end up in the wrong hands. The programs have blossomed into the largest part of American aid to Russia, amounting so far to several billion dollars. There have been two main efforts.

Their impulses lie primarily in an area known as Material Protection, Control and Accounting, or within the NNSA, lovingly, as MPC&A. In brief, this means locking the fissile materials down. Over the years the NNSA has identified approximately 220 buildings at fifty-two sites in Russia that are in dire need of treatment. That's a lot, and as a result, actually there are two treatments. The first is a stop-gap measure called a "rapid upgrade." It involves bricking up the warehouse windows, installing stronger locks, fixing the fences, maybe hiring some guards. The second is a long-term fix called a "comprehensive upgrade." It often involves the full range of Americanized defenses, including crash-resistant fences, bombproof buildings, remote cameras and electronic sensors, bar-coded inventory scanners, advanced locks, well-armed and well-motivated guards, and all sorts of double- and triple-safe procedures.

Such complex constructs require constant care. Agents of the NNSA see evidence already that the Russians are not committed to maintenance and operations, and some complained privately to me that as soon as U.S. funding ends, their elegant MPC&A systems will slip into disrepair. Nonetheless, the NNSA is supposed to wrap up the program, squeeze off the funding, and turn over all the required security upgrades to the Russians by the end of 2008. Knowledgeable observers are skeptical that this schedule can be met. They say that about a third of the identified buildings have yet to be given even rapid upgrades, that these contain about half of Russia's

The persistence of the drug trade worldwide is often used as an object lesson in the difficulty of trying to stop the smuggling of nuclear materials. A tired joke is that the best way to smuggle an atomic bomb is to put it into a bale of marijuana.

The first, managed by the U.S. Department of Defense, has concentrated on getting Russia to consolidate, secure, and to some degree destroy nuclear warheads, as well as some of the missiles, aircraft, and submarines that carry them. The same programs have facilitated the spectacular denuclearization of the former Soviet Union's outlying nations. But these were the maneuverings of conventional actors following the familiar logic of strike and counterstrike. By comparison the perceived vulnerability of fissile materials in the former Soviet Union has presented the United States with a wilderness of unknowns. Securing these stocks is the second main cooperative effort. The job has been given primarily to the U.S. Department of Energy, and specifically to officials there with experience managing the American nuclear-weapons infrastructure—a group now formed into a semiautonomous agency known as the National Nuclear Security Administration, or NNSA.

The NNSA sends managers from Washington and technicians from U.S. national laboratories to supervise the local officials. Its frontline agents tend to be hands-on technical people, impatient to pour concrete and get the jobs done.

entire fissile-material stock, and that they sit at some of the most sensitive sites in the country—areas within the closed cities, where new warheads are assembled, and where the NNSA representatives are increasingly seen as meddlers and spies.

The agency's administrator, a portly former submarine captain and strategic-weapons negotiator named Linton F. Brooks, put it plainly to me. He said, "We are about giving governments the tools to work in those areas where governments have control." Fine. Brooks is an impressive man, and all the more so for his lack of theatrics. He did not pretend to be winning a war, or even to be fighting one, but more simply to be driving up the costs and complications for would-be nuclear bombers. The NNSA's job is to shift the odds, and increase the likelihood that its opponents will fail. It cannot dictate to the Russians. It cannot operate with anything like the flexibility of the guerrillas. But of all the U.S. agencies recently engaged to suppress the nuclear threat, it does seem one of the few that may have contributed something real, even if it has to be called MPC&A.

The CIA appears to have added little to the effort. Presumably its people tag along on some missions, but they

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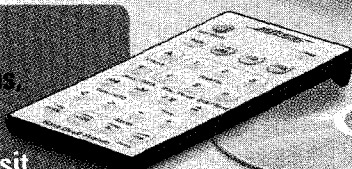


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seem largely just to pursue conventional governmental information—estimating military capacities, or mapping the Russian bureaucracy in order to predict Russian reactions. I spoke to a former high U.S. official who said that during a decade spent securing stockpiles in Russia and receiving countless intelligence briefings, he had never once found information that would have helped him to calibrate the risks specific to a site. Who lives in the neighborhood? Who lives just outside? Who has just arrived? How the hell do any of them survive? What is meant here, tangibly, by *organized crime*? Is there other crime that counts? Who drives the flashy cars? What are the emotions of the people who do not? How much is known in the street about shipments to and from and between the plants? How much is known about what goes on inside? What do people think about the new wall and fences? What do they feel when they see an American flag? Now start all over again, and tell us about the nuclear technicians, the FSB agents, and the ordinary guards. Tell us about their lovers, their holidays, the furniture they dream of buying at IKEA. Tell us about their inner lives.

The official sighed with resignation. I suppose he felt what many believe, that if the United States is hit someday with an atomic bomb, it will in part be because of Washington's discomfort with informal realms—because of a blindness to the street, amply demonstrated in recent times, which will have allowed some bomb-builder the maneuvering room to get the job done.

If you wanted a bomb, you would need this very thing the CIA has lost—a feel for the street. I flew to Ekaterinburg, a Russian city on the Siberian side of the Urals, two time zones east of Moscow. Ekaterinburg is where the czar and his family were liquidated, where the American U-2 pilot Gary Powers was shot down, and where Boris Yeltsin got his start. It has a single-line metro, a small downtown, and a few large hotels. Within a few hours' drive, a visitor can arrive at the perimeter walls and fences of five of Russia's ten closed nuclear cities. They are primarily production sites, and between them they contain all manner of nuclear goods, including warheads in various stages of assembly, and several hundred tons of excellent fissile material. So sensitive are the nuclear cities and other defense sites in the vicinity that the entire region was closed to outsiders during Soviet times. Since the Soviet Union was itself largely closed and compartmentalized, the nuclear cities stood within concentric layers of defenses like fortresses within fortresses, like nested Russian dolls. Still more pervasive defenses existed in the residents' minds. They were expected to inform on their neighbors, as they themselves expected to be informed on, and to rely on all the nested gulags to keep everyone in line.

Describing those years in heavily accented English, a Russian plant manager said to me, "All nuclear material was secret. *State secret!* Anyone stealing nuclear material in Soviet Union was committing state crime. He became state criminal! So there was fear. Real fear. If something got lost somewhere—maybe a piece of paper, or materials, or there was mismatch in balance of plutonium—a person understood

that he would be exiled forever." Hesitating over the right words, he said, "But then when this ... *change* took place, of course people felt more ... *freedom*, I would say."

He was using the word *freedom* for the American ear, and making a familiar argument for the extension of foreign aid. The closed cities and nuclear facilities around Ekaterinburg have received a large portion of the U.S. dollars spent on Russian security upgrades, yet they are the subject of continued wariness by the NNSA, and are of still greater concern to independent critics in the United States, who insist that they remain acutely vulnerable to terrorist theft. Take, for example, the closed city of Ozersk, a community of 85,000 people, whose existence was so hushed under the Soviets that it was not allowed a proper name, and was referred to only by its post office box numbers—first No. 40, then No. 65—in Chelyabinsk, an open city forty-four miles away. The nomenclature remains confused. Ozersk is often and mistakenly called Mayak, for its nuclear production area—an industrial complex within the city's perimeter, a few miles from the residential center. The Mayak Production Association employed 14,500 people as of 2001, and since 1945 has been in the business primarily of processing HEU, plutonium, and tritium for nuclear warheads. Recently it has also thrown the business into reverse, as one of two sites in Russia where fissile material from existing warheads is extracted before shipment to another closed city for blending down. Many tons of the highest-quality weapons-grade HEU and plutonium are present at the site.

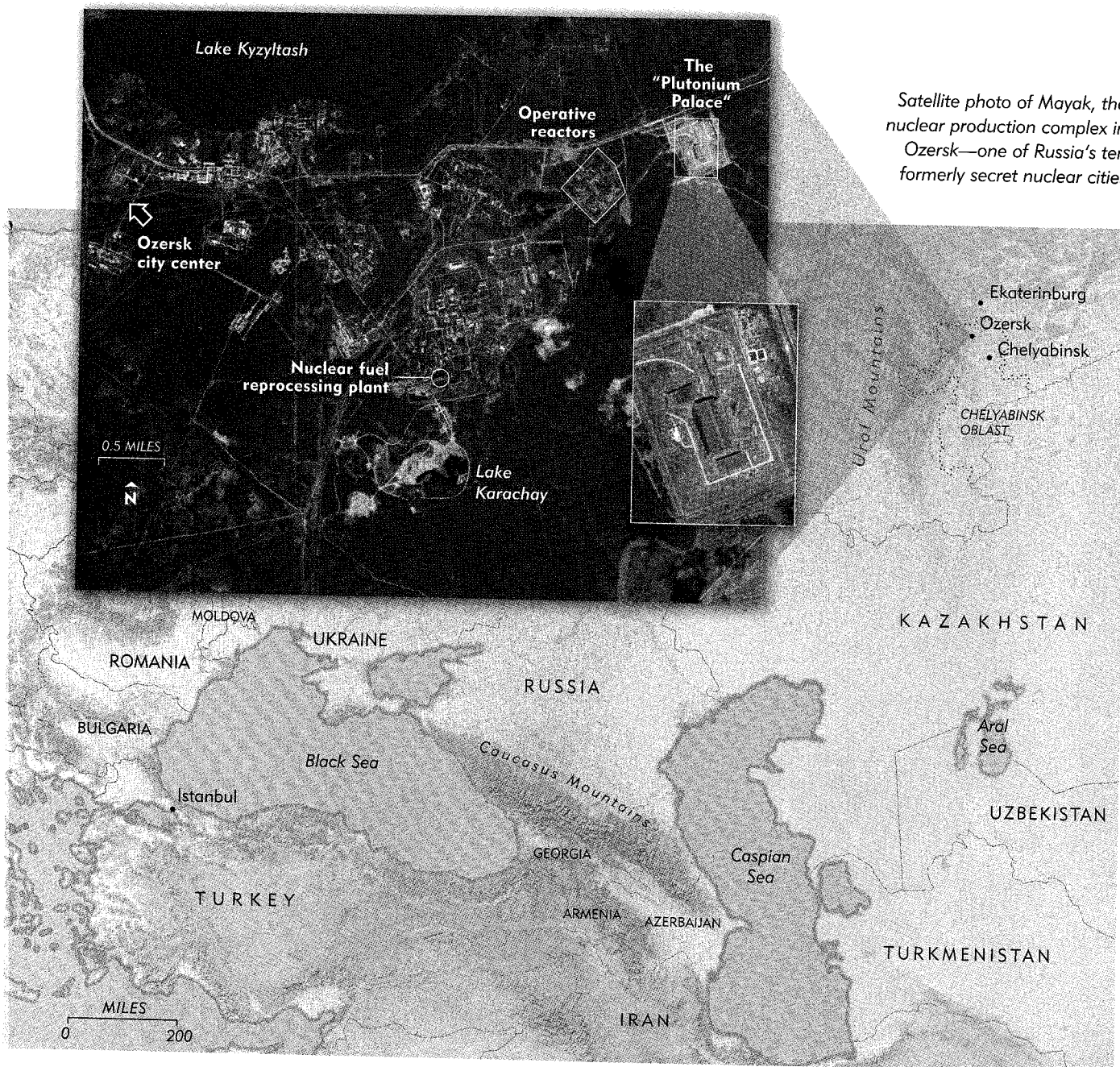
And *nyet*, this is not state secret.

Divulging it is not state crime.

Start with the all-American fact that Mayak is the location of the recently completed "Plutonium Palace," a heavily fortified \$350 million warehouse, which was paid for by the U.S. Congress, and has therefore been heavily publicized. The facility was designed to hold as much as 40 percent of the Russian military's excess fissile material. For now the storage vaults remain empty because of technical and bureaucratic disputes, as well as, perhaps, a sense, in a Russia on the rise, of not wanting to place nuclear assets quite so far out of reach just yet. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that such a beautiful facility will eventually be used—and that the world will be better off when it is.

For those trying to counter the threat of nuclear terrorism, however, the possibility exists that the Palace is just another Maginot fort, a strong point that can be neatly ignored by the new strategists of war. The fort will neither reduce nor protect the large quantities of weapons-grade materials elsewhere in Ozersk. NNSA technicians have struggled to fill the gaps, installing some cameras and radiation monitors, and strengthening some floors and walls—but only in a few of the many buildings where they believe such work is needed, and only intermittently, as the Russians have allowed.

By perverse logic, therefore, Ozersk comes highly recommended to anyone in pursuit of a bomb. The facilities are tucked away two hours south of Ekaterinburg, down unmarked back roads, on a forested plateau of lakes and



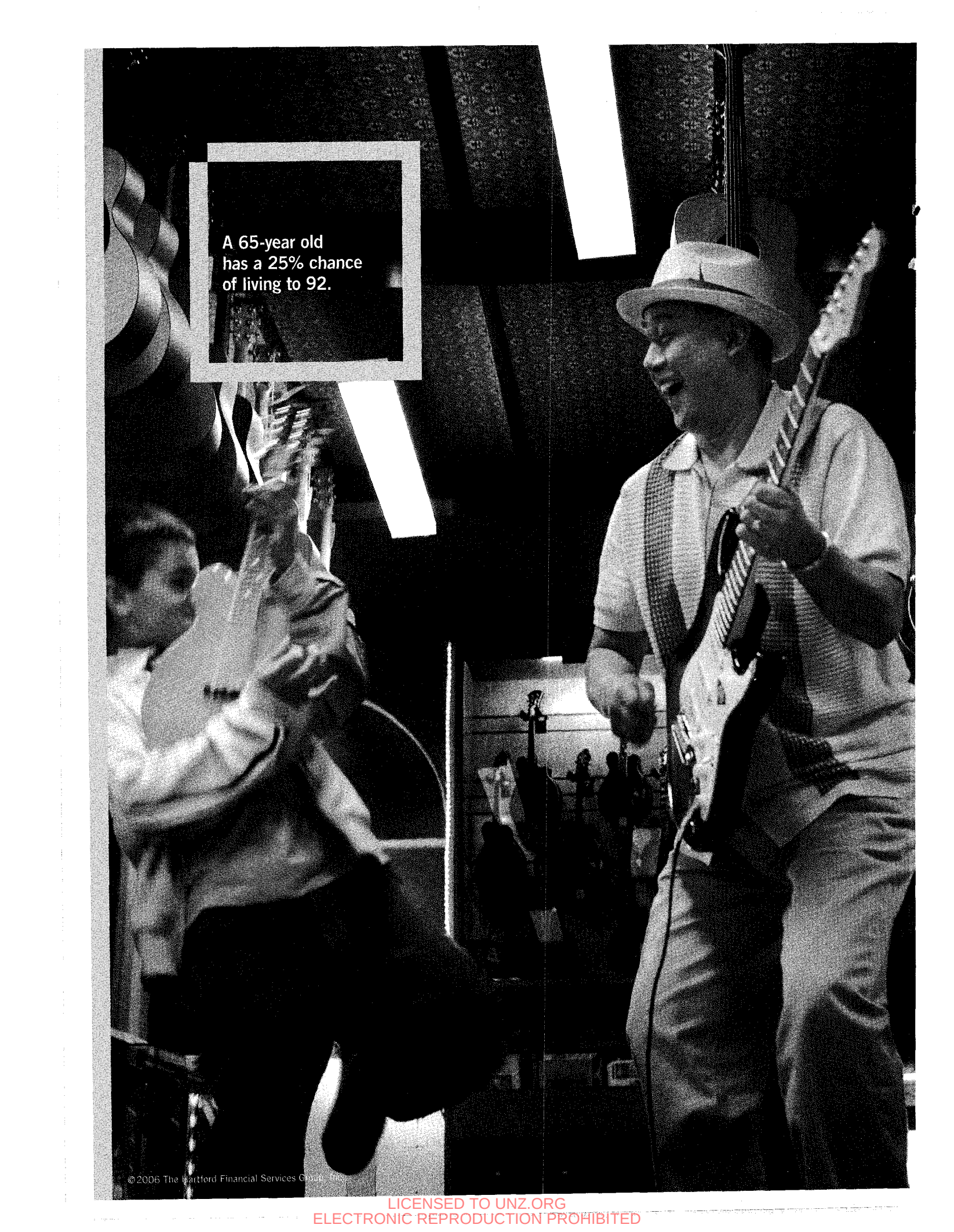
Satellite photo of Mayak, the nuclear production complex in Ozersk—one of Russia's ten formerly secret nuclear cities

small rivers that would seem idyllic were it not for a number of decimated industrial towns and villages. Ozersk's perimeter is large. It encompasses more than 50 square miles, and includes the city itself, the Mayak facilities, a network of paved and dirt roads, an internal bus service, one large internal checkpoint, multiple railroad lines, burial sites for radioactive waste, multiple radioactive lakes, some radioactive swamps, and a lot of radioactive forest. The main gate is on the north side. It has pens where Interior Ministry troops check vehicles going in or out, and verify people's papers. The perimeter is marked by twin parallel chain-link barbed-wire fences, separated by a chemically defoliated strip that is apparently not mined, or raked, or checked for tracks even in the snow. The fences are in reasonable repair, but in many places have no road beside them, and they show no signs of being patrolled. If they are monitored remotely, it is safe to assume that they are not monitored well. On the south side of the site, they run through miles of empty forest. You

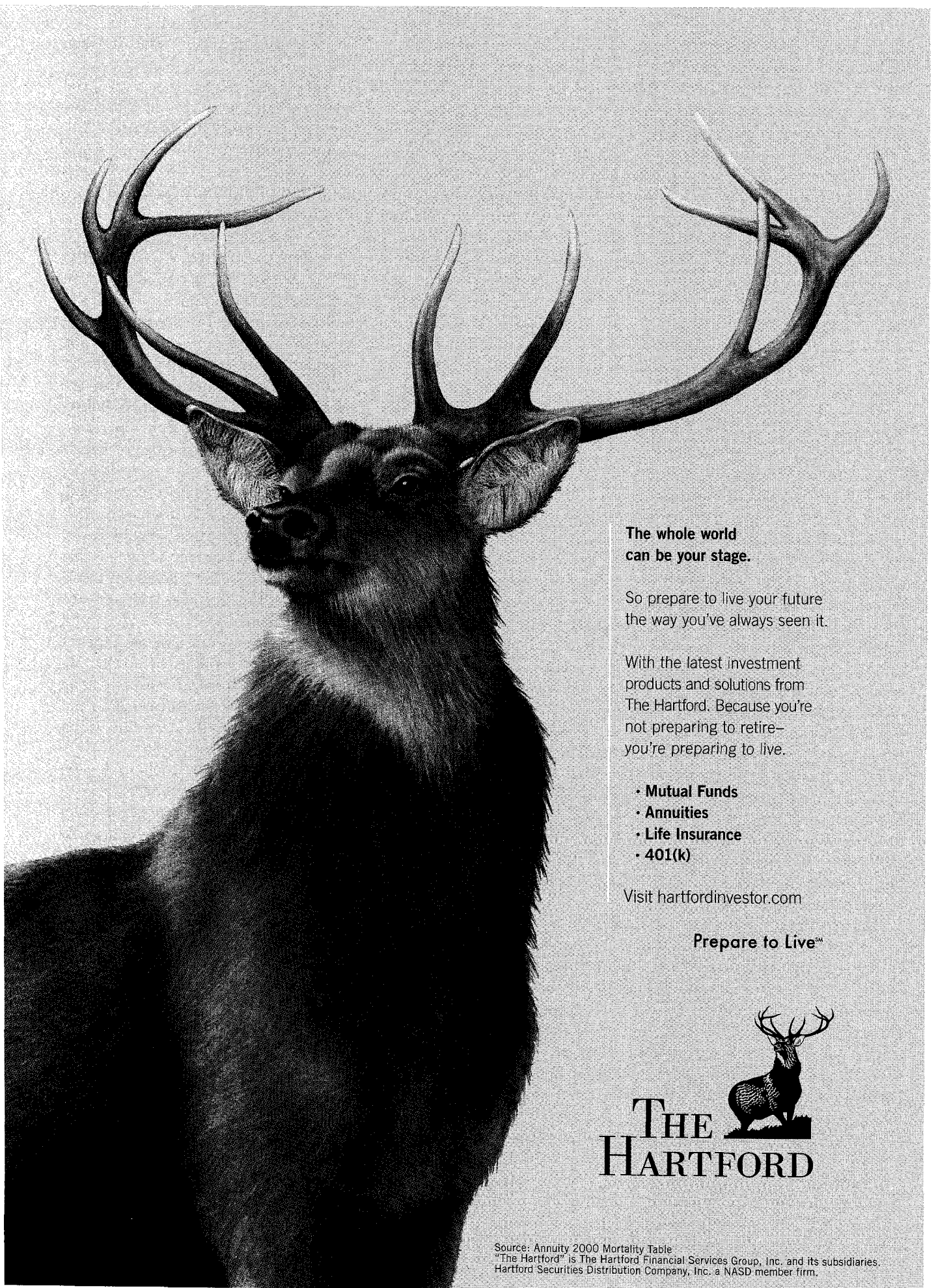
could cross them almost anywhere with little immediate risk, though odds are you would eventually be caught, and the consequences would be severe. And to what advantage? You wouldn't learn much by walking the streets. You might be able to send agents who could establish residency, but that would require too much time, and offer a poor chance of success. Better to back off and think things through, particularly since the essentials can be known from the outside.

Ozersk is in the nuclear business and nothing else. Its weapons-usable HEU is kept in Mayak as oxidized powder, flat metal pucks, elongated ingots, and finely machined warhead hemispheres. Each form is stored in a different type of steel container. The containers are light, because the shielding they contain is minimal. They are sealed but not locked. They sit in vaults or ordinary storage rooms. In addition to the standard containers, there are larger, brightly colored shipping containers, used to transport the material to and from other nuclear cities and sites, by truck and rail.

SOURCE: DIGITAL GLOBE VIA GOOGLE EARTH; ANNOTATION COURTESY OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL; MAP CREATED BY RYAN MORRIS



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Empty shipping containers are sometimes kept outdoors. High-resolution satellite photographs freely available on the Internet show them stacked in the yards, and in other ways help to identify the buildings in the complex. It does not matter that the photographs are old. Any of thousands of ordinary workers at Mayak could update them, and also provide information on material-processing schedules, NNSA upgrades, broken cameras, the patterns of the night shifts, and the locations of guards who use narcotics or drink on the job. It would not be difficult to find such an informant—for instance, in the taverns of Chelyabinsk. Afterward the action would have to be fast and accurate. Moving through the forest from the east or south perimeter fences, a raiding party on foot could hit any of the buildings within two hours. This would hardly be a sure thing. Ten years ago would have been a better time to try. But with luck it could still be done.

Or knowledgeable Americans urgently believe so. Some of the best of them work for a richly endowed organization known as the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), which was founded by former Senator Sam Nunn and the CNN mogul Ted Turner. The director of NTI's efforts in the former Soviet states is a smart, no-nonsense Washington insider named Laura Holgate, who spent years as a senior U.S. official grappling with Russian nuclear-weapons security. When we met, at NTI's buttoned-up headquarters, in Washington, she repeated a colleague's anecdote about a certain closed city where informal parking lots have sprung up outside of holes in the fence, because workers prefer not to bother with the gate. But I wanted to know about Ozersk, which seems to be more orderly, perhaps because of the quantities of bomb materials there. I asked about the security upgrades. She answered indirectly. "It's a very challenging environment to work in. You set up a radiation detector, and it's constantly going off, mostly false alarms. There's so much clandestine movement of other stuff—cooking oil, insulation, you name it. So how are you supposed to catch the illicit movement of material as unradioactive as HEU? They put a little box of uranium in the corner, and they're fine." Moreover, the Russian government, she implied, can be somewhat dismissive of such matters.

Later, in Russia, I spoke to a modest American technician with a decade of experience in the secret cities of the Urals. He knew enough of Washington to want to remain anonymous, but did not seem interested in diplomatic maneuvering or nuclear policy. He was a detail man, a practitioner. He said, "Some of what the NNSA puts in is worthwhile, maybe. And other stuff seems, ah, not to get used. I took a tour one time, and they had installed a radiation monitor, a portal, for traffic going in and out of the site. So I say, 'So, how's the portal working?'"

"And this Russian says, 'Oh, we shut it off most of the time.'"

"Why?"

"Because it's always going off."

"How come it always goes off?"

"He says, 'Well ... it's the people on the buses. People go fishing in the lake, and when they catch fish and bring them

out on the bus, they set off the radiation monitor. And then we've got to respond.'"

The technician laughed at his own story. Just when you think you've nabbed a terrorist, what you've really nabbed is a radioactive fish. After ten years around Russia's nuclear facilities, he was not concerned. He said, "But you know, things like radiation portals? That's just *our* method of security. They've got their own methods, which are probably as effective."

"You mean human intelligence?"

"Yeah. It's more *people*-intensive, the way they do it."

Others have described Ozersk's human side in dire terms—children selling drugs in the schools, mobsters in the construction and trucking business, large numbers of unvetted Central Asians arriving to do menial work that before would have been reserved for loyal Slavs. The worst of the lot are the soldiers whose duty is to guard the site. Called "the dregs of the dregs" by some critics, they are second-round conscripts, picked up by the Interior Ministry only after they have been rejected by the army. They in no sense constitute an elite corps, as the ministry sometimes claims. NTI has catalogued a string of known incidents of Mayak guards killing each other, committing suicide, stealing weapons, running away, buying narcotics, drinking on duty, and in one case imbibing a bottle of antifreeze and dying.

The problem for you, in your quest for a bomb, is that even these soldiers will fight. This is less a possibility than a fact. They will fight whether sober or drunk. Their presence at Ozersk means that no raiding party will be able to hit without provoking a noisy response. Still, American specialists have warned that a large and coordinated attack could overwhelm or counter traditional Russian defenses, pointing to the Chechen seizures of a Moscow theater in 2002 and a Beslan school in 2004 as evidence that terrorists within Russia already possess the wherewithal.

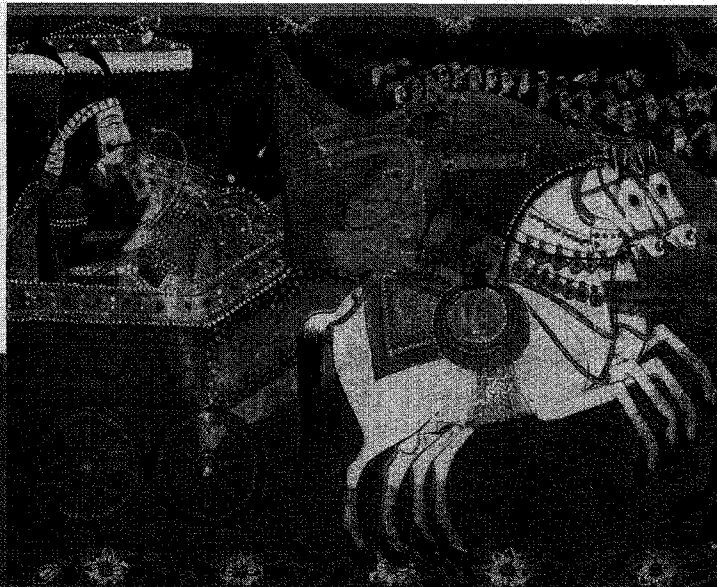
If you wanted a bomb, however, you would have to be concerned not only with getting your hands on fissile material but also with getting away. The getaway factor is not often raised in the United States, where the prevailing view is of a Wild West environment in which a nuclear bandit would need only to ride out of town in order to vanish safely. But up close to Ozersk, I kept running across evidence of a powerful and self-confident Russia that seemed more like its old autocratic self, and at least selectively under control.

The nearest international border to Ozersk is with Kazakhstan, only four hours' drive to the south, but the route is poor, because it runs through Chelyabinsk and crosses border checkpoints using roads that can easily be blocked. A safer plan would be to head southwest, 1,200 miles or more, for the Caspian Sea or the Caucasus, with the goal of smuggling the uranium to Turkey through Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, or northern Iran. The trip, however, would require at least three days just for the escape from Russia—an interval that becomes the minimum head start required before the loss of material is noticed at Mayak. And raiders would be lucky to have three hours. In good conscience, therefore (and perhaps with some relief), a rational bomb-maker would abandon any idea of commando heroics.

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But that is not to say you should give up on Ozersk. Possibilities abound for an inside job. A culture of mobsterism and corruption broadens the opportunities for recruiting thieves. Insiders could neutralize any practical defenses, pass undetected through the gates with a load of unshielded HEU, and provide a getaway team with a head start that could be measured in weeks or months—perhaps right up to the time an assembled bomb ignites. Linton Brooks described the possibility of insider theft as the greatest challenge facing the NNSA in Russia today. The solutions, which at best can only be partial, consist of efforts to complicate the task of would-be thieves, requiring them to bring more people into a conspiracy and to operate with larger teams.

An agent with deep experience in these matters said, “You try to make it more difficult by putting in doors that require two people to open. You put in video surveillance. You put in watchers to watch the watchers. You put in accounting systems to bring the facilities from paper ledgers into the bar-code era. But there are very deep-seated cultural issues here. In the Soviet days you were a very trusted person, an elite person, if you were working in these facilities. And now we come along and say, ‘OK, you’re not allowed to go into the vault by yourself anymore.’ That can take a while to sink in. Also, there’s a different perception of rules and regulations. The rule of law

HEU toward an assembly point for a bomb. Will you go left or right? The roads keep forking, and you will often turn one way or the other for no more discernible reason than the fact that forward motion requires the choice. American officials who would try to stop you face an infinite braid that becomes the measure of a hostile, corrupt, and anarchic world.

In Washington I spoke to one of the many officials in town who, though carrying out their assignments perfectly well, are too nervous about domestic politics to risk being identified. He described an NNSA effort called the Second Line of Defense, which installs radiation monitors at border-crossing points throughout the former Soviet Union. The program is most fully developed in Georgia, a skeletal nation threatened by separatist enclaves and barely able to keep warm through the winters. The official said, “The U.S. Corps of Engineers is working with Customs to build whole new border-crossing facilities in Georgia, and we’re in the process of installing upgraded radiation monitors, in conjunction with that.”

I said, “I guess I can see the logic of the radiation monitors, but why are we building customs stations for the Georgians?”

“It’s a joint venture to try to control smuggling.”

Georgia is one of the most corrupt nations on earth. Many of its politicians are crooks. Its officials routinely steal. Its economy is based almost entirely on black markets. Its people

If the U.S. is hit someday with an atomic bomb, many believe it will be because of Washington’s discomfort with informal realms—because of a blindness to the street that will have allowed a bomb-builder the maneuvering room to get the job done.

is not looked at the same way. There’s more skepticism in Russia. It’s a very complicated problem. Bricking up windows is part of the solution, but it’s not everything.”

It’s not as if the Russians don’t already know how to build strong rooms. I once mentioned to the American technician in the Urals that even ordinary doors there are heavy. He said, “One of the guys at the plant said to me, ‘Jack, I watch American movie last night.’” The technician imitated a Russian accent. “‘And I see something strange. Drug police. They kick in door! In Russia, this not possible!’”

Or maybe in Russia, this not necessary.

With 100 pounds of stolen HEU split between a couple of knapsacks, and a healthy head start on Russian security forces, you would not have to worry much about getting caught by Americans. The United States claims to be building a layered defense, but the only layer that amounts to much is the NNSA’s securing of stockpiles—and you have just penetrated it with the help of workers on the site. At this point the American defenses fall spectacularly apart. The reasons are ultimately institutional and complex, but initially may be as simple as confusion created by the expanding geometry of choices for anyone carrying stolen

have nothing to survive on if they do not hustle. I said, “Why should we care about ordinary smuggling in Georgia? Cigarettes?odka? Fuel? For that matter, narcotics?” What I meant was, If even the ordinary black markets of Georgia are seen as a threat, where does the impulse to impose order end?

He stayed in his lane, but executed a tidy reversal. He said, “It’s a good question. And I don’t know that I have the answer, but the genesis anyway was nuclear. So I guess in conjunction with our new equipment, it makes sense to upgrade the stations.”

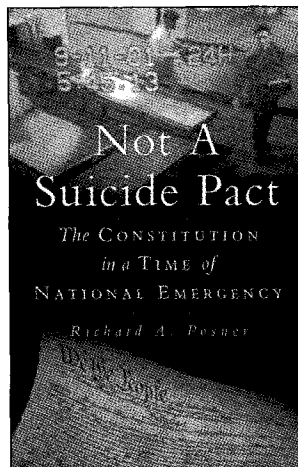
Hoping to get some notion of the realities, I went to a model Customs project, a station the Americans call “Red Bridge,” which stands at the main crossing point between Georgia and Azerbaijan. The first improvement there was the construction of a housing compound where for several years before, border guards had been living in tents and cooking over open fires. By the time the U.S. Department of Homeland Security was finished with it, in 2003, the compound consisted of five single-family houses, a barracks, a dining hall, an administration building, a vehicle-maintenance garage, a warehouse for supplies, an armory, various utility buildings, a dog kennel, two water-storage buildings, a sewage plant, an electrical substation, perimeter fences, two guard

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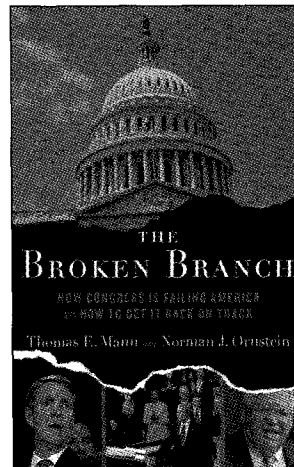
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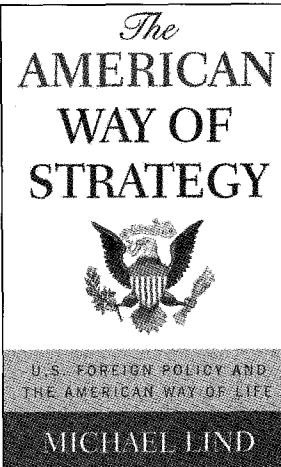
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towers, two helipads, a sports field, a separate soccer field, some new paved roads and parking lots, and, of course, a parade ground. After the official opening, a Customs and Border Protection newsletter asked the CBP program manager, James Kelly, "Is it as grand as it sounds?"

"Indeed it is," Kelly said. "It was built to Western standards."

Golly, and that was just Phase One. The United States then shifted its spending down the road to the port of entry itself. Over the following two years, the CBP oversaw the construction of a \$2.2 million facility, whose primary purpose would be to "help Georgia become a more effective partner in the worldwide effort to control the passage of terrorists and their weapons." This time the improvements included a six-lane roadway, inspector booths, cargo-inspection areas, closed-circuit remote-control television cameras, lots of computers, a high-frequency long-distance radio-communication system, and the crowning glory—a beautiful air-conditioned two-story stucco building with spaces for processing the grateful public, as well as detention cells, back offices, a dormitory wing for Georgian customs agents, private sleeping rooms for American officials and other VIPs, and a second-floor patio, apparently for sitting outside on warm evenings.

The day I got there was too chilly for that. A short line of trucks crept in from Azerbaijan, and a few cars passed through in the opposite direction. The new radiation monitors were not yet in place, but within a few weeks they were certain to be. I asked to see the control room, which is meant to be the nerve center of the operation. There was a delay until the key could be found, whereupon the chief showed me in. The room was a windowless refuge, empty except for a few chairs, some computers, and a bank of flat-screen displays. Someone had left a video game on. Someone had left a magazine. Empty cardboard boxes were stacked in a corner. After a while an eager young man came in and demonstrated how a camera on the roof could be swiveled and zoomed.

The anonymous official in Washington tried to explain why such improvements matter. I had asked him why anyone carrying a bomb's worth of HEU would choose to go through any official gate anywhere. He did not predict that anyone would. Using Georgia as an example he said, "The good news is that there aren't very many of these border crossings. And to the extent we've got them covered, we force people to use horses, I guess." Horses, mules, donkeys, tractors, dirt bikes, plucky little Ladas—whatever. A bit of off-road travel wouldn't seem like much of an inconvenience to nuclear terrorists on the move, and American officials know it well. The problem is that U.S. agencies, when pressured by conflicting mandates and forced to work with corrupt and dysfunctional local governments, essentially throw up their hands at the complexity of it all, and abandon the fight in advance.

In this context Red Bridge is not just a customs post, but a premature surrender—and a typical one. Faced with the need to put systems in place that will function day after day to identify unexpected nuclear smugglers, America turns to the uniformed agents of local governments, loads them down with air-conditioned buildings and gadgetry, and then

asks them to sit in a closed room watching for information from television cameras and radiation monitors. To make things worse, the failure is not individual but collective, and therefore difficult to correct. It appears to include even the clandestine services, some of which are chasing al-Qaeda around, but none of which shows signs of wanting to lay traplines through the back country on the off chance—highly unlikely in any given location—of snaring two knapsacks' worth of dull grey metal. Of course it is possible that they are doing this, and being so discreet that for once they leave no evidence of their passage, but if I had to move a load of HEU across international borders, I would gamble that they are not.

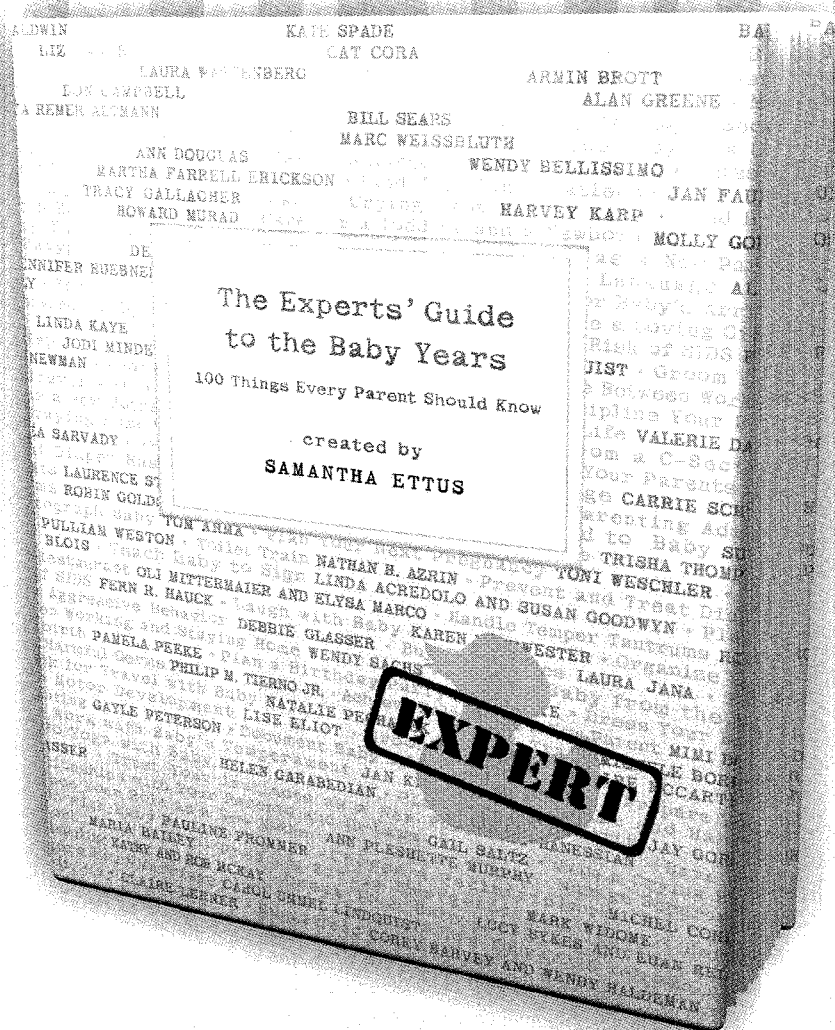
It is as if the U.S. government, when looking at a world map for purposes of HEU interdiction, has declared entire regions to be off-limits to anything other than fictions. As noted, those back-country regions are where some of the world's principal opium routes lie and, for independent reasons, are the areas through which stolen HEU seems most likely to pass. It is generally assumed that for the right price, opium traffickers will provide transportation, lodging, and expert advice to nuclear terrorists moving through. Indeed, the persistence of the drug trade worldwide is often used as an object lesson in the difficulty of trying to stop the smuggling of nuclear materials. A tired joke is that the best way to smuggle an atomic bomb is to put it into a bale of marijuana. For the United States the proximity between the two trades is an unfortunate coincidence, but it could be turned into a fortunate one, through quiet conversations with a few key people. If you wanted a bomb, you should of course be having quiet conversations with those same key people.

Finding them merely requires casual exploration along the preexisting lines of defense, especially along the national boundaries that cross the smuggling routes. The work would involve poking around meekly, sometimes with an amateur translator and guide. The purpose would not be to recruit peasant armies and spies, but to get a feel for the local functioning of power. In most areas there are only two or three people at the top, and they tend to be at once aggressive and benevolent men with interests larger than just the movement of drugs. Their names would quickly become apparent. Some might be dangerous to approach, but most would be hospitable to strangers. On the second or third trip back, a U.S. agent might make it known that if ever a load of HEU showed up, a large reward would be paid.

Some months ago I made the first of two brief trips through the mountains of far-eastern Turkey, in the Kurdish hinterland along the border with Iran. This is the prime smuggling country I mentioned earlier. The local villages may seem sleepy, but they are wide awake. It became apparent to me that the entire region is tightly sewed up, that nothing moves here without notice, and that any sustained activity requires approval. The authority is not the Turkish government. The army is here to fight the sporadic guerrilla war against Kurdish separatists, who occasionally ambush a patrol or plant a mine, then retreat higher into the mountains. The main garrison is in a tiny town called Bascale, which

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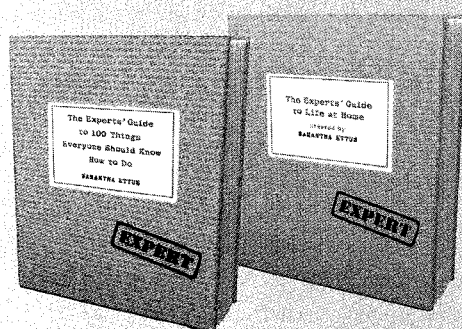
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is better known for its heroin labs. When A. Q. Khan was building Pakistan's nuclear-weapons facilities, some of the more sensitive parts passed through here.

Bascale has a large yellow house in a central compound, which belongs to the chief of a clan that is dominant for miles around, an extended family named Ertosi, which consists of 150,000 to 200,000 people. One afternoon I was invited in for tea. The host was a black-bearded heavyset middle-aged man who had arrived from Ankara for a few days. He was a son of the chief, and so was important, too. He had guards and flunkies around. We sat against the walls in a large bare room, with photographs of dead Ertosis at one end, and a big-screen television at the other. The television was tuned to a banned Kurdish station, broadcast via satellite from London. My translator introduced me as an English teacher on holiday, which threw our host a little off balance, I think. He wore a heavy gold chain and a diamond ring. He had an array of cell phones in front of him on the floor, several of which rang. Between calls, I asked him about the diesel trade. He said a little, but then clammed up when I got into details. To my translator he said, "Why does an English teacher want to know so much?"

Weeks later I returned to the area and sought out a certain subclan leader I had heard about. He was a powerful man, the chief of the 20,000 Ertosis who occupy the most active stretch of the border. I found him in a hamlet high on a mountainside. It was late at night, and the air was cold. We sat among ten of his men in a small stone room around a wood-burning stove. He was a small man, sixty years old, with sharp hooded eyes and a hooked nose. He was dressed like a Kurdish peasant, with a tweed jacket down to his knees. His hands were hardened by manual labor. From the ease with which he gave orders and the deference shown to him by his men, it was clear that he had been laying out law for many years. We avoided mention of narcotics or HEU, and talked instead in a transparent code about the business in "diesel fuel." He said, "The government cannot control the border. The Kurds just naturally do." No stranger could cross without his knowledge.

Now back to the project at hand. If you wanted to build a bomb, and paid attention to men like the clan leaders in the mountains, you should have no trouble getting the bomb fuel through.

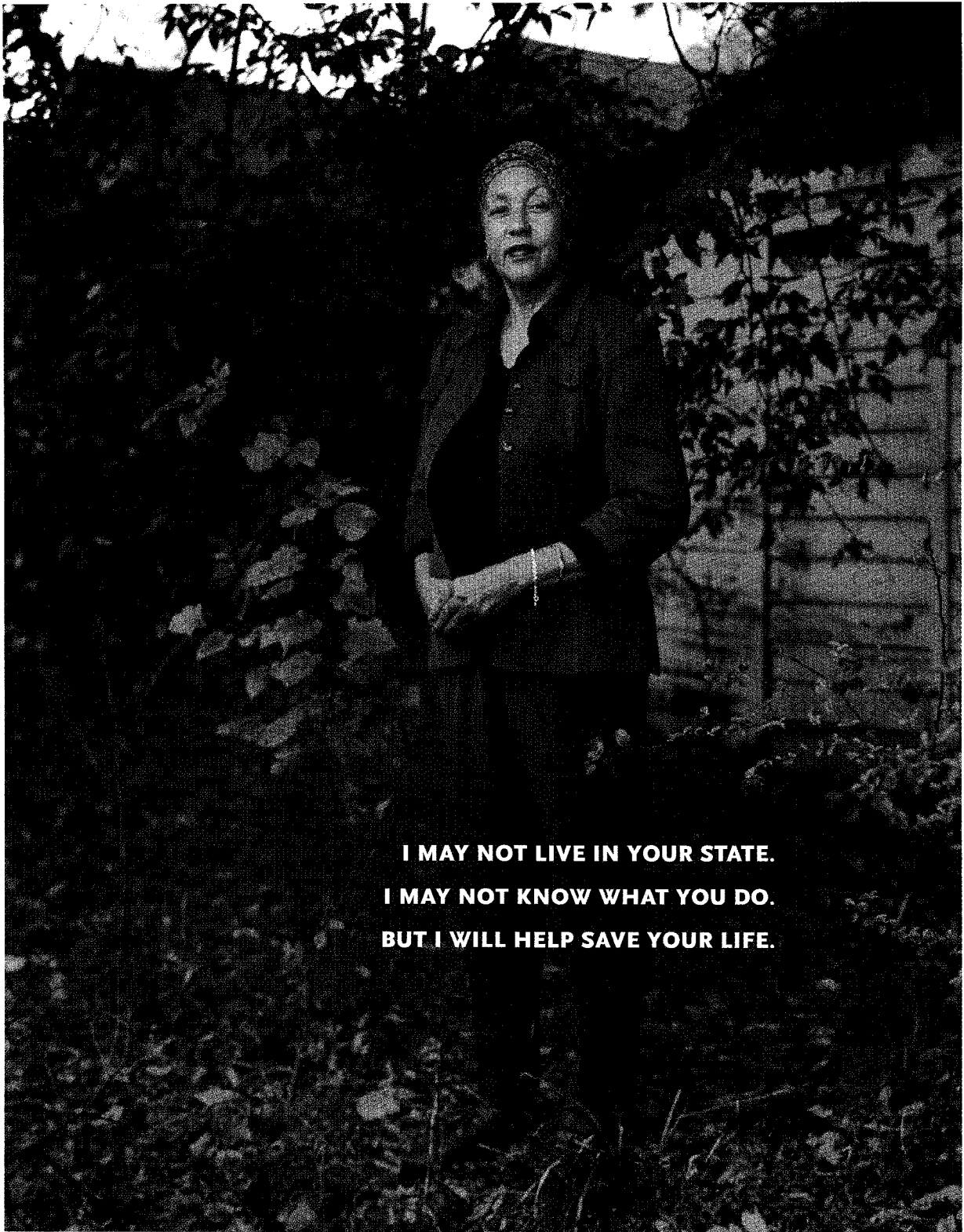
Then comes the problem of assembly. You should take it as a given that no nation would dare to be associated with the construction of an independent atomic bomb. Not North Korea, not Sudan, not Iran. The certainty of retribution after its use far outweighs whatever benefit might be gained. Moreover, you could never trust those governments not to wait until the end and confiscate the goods. So the work will have to be carried out in secret—and in some private machine shop perhaps no larger than a five-car garage. The shop will contain numerically controlled milling machines and lathes, as well as other expensive equipment, and will require a plausible explanation—a front company set up to manufacture, say, transmission components. The best location would seem to

be in some Third World city, where governmental control is lax, corruption is rampant, and the noise from the shop will be masked by industrial activities nearby. Take your pick: Mombasa, Karachi, Mumbai, Jakarta, Mexico City, and a finite list of others. You might as well choose Istanbul, because it's close to where you'd be coming from.

Construction of the bomb would take maybe four months. The size of your technical team would depend on the form of HEU. At the minimum it would consist of a nuclear physicist or engineer, a couple of skilled machinists, an explosives expert, and perhaps an electronics person, for the trigger. The essentials of the work are easy to grasp. A cannon-type bomb employs two HEU hemispheres which when joined together form a single sphere. A sphere is the geometric shape that provides the smallest surface area in relation to mass, lowering the threshold of criticality. The receiving hemisphere is hollow on one side. The other hemisphere, known as the bullet or plug, has a perfectly matched convex surface on the opposing side. It sits in wait at the top of a steel barrel sometimes as long as a stepladder is high. When the time comes to detonate the bomb, a chemical propellant shoots the plug down the barrel. The ideal velocity is 1,000 meters per second, about as fast as a high-speed rifle round. The goal is to slam the masses together before the nuclear reaction has a chance to start. Once they have joined, the HEU can be trusted to do its job, though with a primitive, garage-made device there will be some uncertainty about the explosive yield. A common misperception about terrorist bomb makers is that they would try to imitate a military device, and would therefore require a level of expertise found only in government laboratories—but you would not care whether New York was hit with a ten- or a twenty-kiloton blast.

Even so, the construction of a bomb is not a casual project. The machinery, the noise, and especially the likely presence of team members who are not locals, provide the United States with the last chance of self-defense. A city like Istanbul, which appears from a distance to be anarchic, and is famously resistant to central authority, is up close and in practice a patchwork of tightly knit communities with something of the organic power structures of the borderlands. In even the most chaotic neighborhoods, where industrial shops are mixed among illegal apartment blocks and communities of impoverished newcomers and squatters, it would be difficult to keep the neighbors from asking inconvenient questions. The same is true in Mombasa, Karachi, and every other city where a bomb could conceivably be built. A United States government that could lay traplines in their slums would have a much better chance of stopping a terrorist attack than any amount of naval maneuvering or bureaucratic restructuring can provide.

In the end, if you wanted a bomb and calculated the odds, you would have to admit that they were stacked against you, simply because of how the world works—and that this may be why others like you, if there have been any, have so far not succeeded. You would understand, though, that the odds are not impossible. You would of course have many concerns as you moved ahead. But perhaps the thing that should worry you the least is the American government's war on terror. ▀



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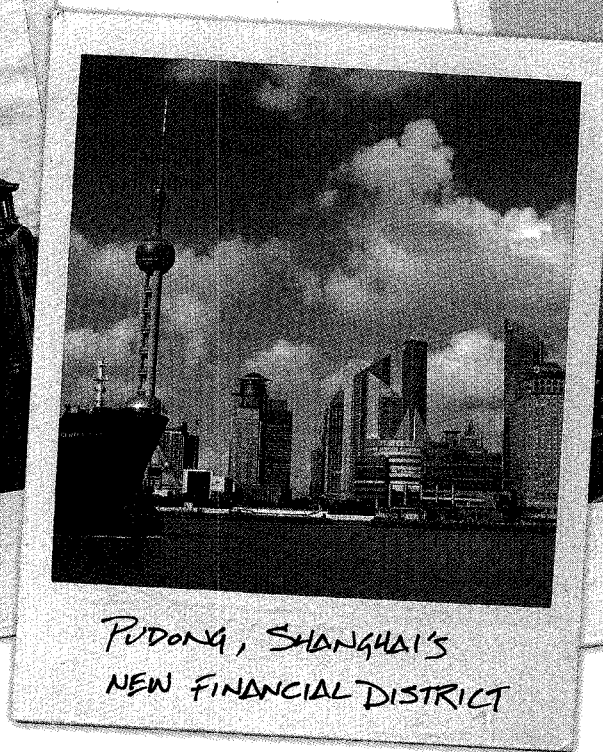
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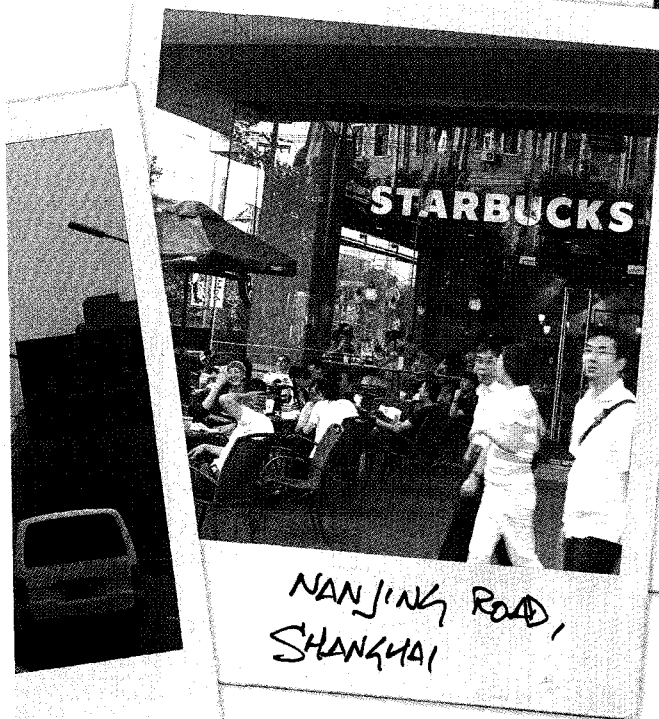
BY JAMES FALLOWS

Photographs by the author

Twenty years ago, my wife and I moved with our two young sons to Tokyo. We expected to be there for three or four months. We ended up staying in Japan and Malaysia for nearly four years. We traveled frequently in China, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, and the Philippines, and we dodged visa rules to get into Burma and Vietnam. One year our children attended Japanese public school, which helped and hurt them in ways we're still hearing about. After our family moved back to Washington, I spent most of another year on reporting trips in Asia.

*James Fallows is an Atlantic
national correspondent.*

Not long ago, my wife and I moved to Shanghai for an indefinite stay. You can't do the same thing twice, and we know that this experience will be different. Our children are twenty years older and on their own. We are, well, twenty years older. The last time, everything we saw in Japan and China was new to us. This time, we're looking at Shanghai to compare its skyscrapers and luxury-goods shopping malls with the tile-roofed shop houses and rundown bungalows we first saw here in 1986. The whole experience of expatriation has changed because of the Internet, which allows you to listen to



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SHANGHAI
STREET SCENE

radio programs via Webcast and talk daily with friends and family via Skype.

But it still means something to be away from the people you know and the scenes and texture of daily home-front life: the newspapers, the movies, the range of products in the stores. (Most of America's ubiquitous "Made in China" merchandise is hard to find in China itself, since it's generally destined straight for export.) And the overall exercise is similar in this way: the Japan of the 1980s was getting a lot of the world's attention; today's China is getting even more. My family and I saw Japan on the way up. During the first few months we were there, the dollar lost one-third of its value against the yen. On each trip to the money-changing office the teller's look seemed to become more pitying, and on each trip to the grocery store (forget about restaurants!) we ratcheted our buying targets another notch downward. The headlines trumpeted the yen's strength and the resulting astronomical valuation of Japan's land, companies, and holdings as signs of the nation's preeminence. The dollar's collapse made us acutely aware of the social bargain that affected everyone in Japan: high domestic prices that penalized consumers, rewarded producers, and subsidized the export success of big Japanese firms.

China has kept the value of its currency artificially low (as Japan did until 1985, just before we got there), and because it's generally so much poorer than Japan, the daily surprise is how inexpensive, rather than expensive, the basics of life can be. Starbucks coffee shops are widespread and wildly popular in big cities, even though the prices are equivalent to their U.S. levels. But for the same 24 yuan, or just over \$3, that a young Shanghai office worker pays for a latte, a construction worker could feed himself for a day or two from the noodle shop likely to be found around the corner from Starbucks. Pizza Hut is also very popular, and is in the "fine dining" category. My wife and I walked into one on a Wednesday evening and were turned away

because we hadn't made reservations. Taco Bell Grande is similarly popular and prestigious; the waiters wear enormous joke-like sombreros that would probably lead to lawsuits from the National Council of La Raza if worn in stateside Taco Bells. Kentucky Fried Chicken is less fancy but is a runaway success in China, as it is in most of Asia.

Through my own experiment in the economics of staple foods, I have been surprised to learn that there is such a thing as beer that is too cheap, at least for my tastes. On each of my first few days on scene, I kept discovering an acceptable brand of beer that cost half as much as the beer I'd had the previous day. It was the Shanghai version of Zeno's paradox: the beer became steadily cheaper yet never quite became free. I had an early surprise discovery of imported Sam Adams, for 12 yuan, or \$1.50, per 355-ml bottle, which is the regular U.S. size. The next day, I found a bottle of locally brewed Tiger, which is the national beer of Singapore, for 7 yuan, or 84 cents per 350 ml. Soon I had moved to 600-ml "extra value" bottles of Tiger at 6 yuan (72 cents per 600 ml), then Tsingtao at 3.90 yuan (45 cents per 600 ml), then Suntory at 2.90 yuan (35 cents per 600 ml). It was when I hit the watery, sickly-sweet Suntory that I knew I'd gone too far. There was one step further I hesitated to take: a local product called REEB (ha ha!), which is what I often see the illegal-migrant construction workers swilling, and which was on sale for 2.75 yuan. One night, in a reckless mood, I decided to give REEB a try. It was weaker than the Suntory—but actually better, because not as sweet.

The signs of China's rise are of course apparent everywhere. We can still see many parts of Shanghai that have escaped the building boom of the last two decades: the streets lined with plane trees in the old French Concession district, the men who lounge outside in pajamas or just boxer shorts when the weather is hot. But to see them we have to look past everything that's new, and the latest set of construction cranes or arc-welding teams working through the night to finish yet more projects. From a room

in the futuristic Tomorrow Square (!) building where we have been staying, I can look across People's Square to see three huge public video screens, which run commercials and music videos seemingly nonstop. The largest screen, nearly two miles away, is the entire side of the thirty-seven-story Aurora building in Pudong, Shanghai's new financial district. In the daytime, the sides of the building are a shiny gold reflective color. At night, they show commercials to much of the town. "People under thirty can't remember anything but a boom," a European banker who has come to Shanghai to expand a credit-card business told me. "It's been fifteen years of double-digit annual expansion. No one anywhere has seen anything like that before."

My family arrived in Japan just at the beginning of what is widely considered to be its collapse. About the strange nature of that "decline"—one that left Japan richer, and its manufacturing and trading position stronger, than it was during its "boom"—there will be more to say in later reports. But obviously it raises the question: Is this ahead for China? Have we arrived in time to watch another bubble burst?

I have not before been anyplace that seemed simultaneously so controlled and so out of control. The control is from on high—and for most people, most of the time, it's not something they bump into. What's out of control is everything else.

I don't know—no one can—but as a benchmark for later reports, I will mention some of the things that have surprised me in my first few weeks, and I'll do so via lists.

Numbered lists are popular everywhere (the Ten Commandments, the Four Freedoms) but they seem particularly attractive in this part of the world. When I first arrived in Japan, everyone was talking about the "Three Ks"—the three kinds of work for which the country was quietly tolerating immigrant labor. These were what translated as the "Three Ds": the jobs considered too *kitanai* (dirty), *kiken* (dangerous), or *kitsui* (difficult) to attract native-born workers in modern, rich Japan. During World War II, Japanese forces were notorious for applying a policy of "Three Alls" to occupied China: kill all, burn all, loot all. Memories of that slogan made for hard feelings when a Japanese-owned firm recently tried to register the trademark "Three Alls" (*sanguang*) in China; because of protests, the application was turned down. Early this year the Chinese government put out a widely publicized list of "Eight Honors and Eight Dishonors," or more prosaically "Eight Do's and Don'ts," to express what President Hu Jintao called the "socialist concept of honor and disgrace." For instance: Do strive arduously; Don't wallow in luxury. I bought a poster with the full list at the local Xinhua bookstore.

In a similar constructive spirit, I now offer "Four Cautions and Two Mysteries." These are meant to illustrate what has surprised me so far and what I am most curious about. It is also a partial and preliminary agenda for future inquiry.

CAUTION ONE: WATCH OUT, JAPANESE PEOPLE!

To get into a talk with a Japanese intellectual or statesman is sooner or later to ponder the effects of World War II. When will Japan emerge from the war's shadow as a "normal" nation, with a constitution written by its own people (versus the one created by Douglas MacArthur) and with a bona fide army, as opposed to something that has to call itself the "Self-Defense Force"? When will the Chinese and Koreans—and for that matter the Singaporeans and Filipinos and Australians—stop mau-mauing Japan with their wartime complaints? What special mission and message does Japan have for the world, as the first and only country to have suffered a nuclear attack? Will Japan's view of America always be skewed into an inferiority/superiority complex, because of the U.S. role as conqueror in the war? The process is similar to discussions in Germany—except that Germans tend to be preemptively apologetic about the problems their forebears caused the world, and Germans make no special claim to suffering like Japan's.

The process is not at all similar to discussions about the war on this side of the Sea of Japan. I put this item first because for me it has been the most startling. "Frankly, we hate the Japanese," an undergraduate at a prestigious Chinese university told me, in English. The main difference between his comment and what I heard from countless other young people was the word *frankly*.

Why should this be surprising, given the centuries of tension between China and Japan? Mainly because of the people who expressed their hostility in the most vehement form: students in their teens and early twenties. They had not been born, nor had their parents (nor even, in many cases, their grandparents), when Japanese troops seized Manchuria in the 1930s, bombed and occupied Shanghai, and slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians during the Rape of Nanking. Wartime memories die hard, but you expect them to be most intense among actual participants or victims, and therefore to fade over time. Israeli teenagers aren't obsessed with today's Germans. I was not able to spend much time at universities talking with students when I was in China in the 1980s, but I don't remember anything comparable to today's level of bile.

The breadth of hostility surprised me for another reason. For years I have been skeptical of the idea of an anti-Japanese resurgence in China, viewing it as government-manufactured sentiment designed to deflect potential protest toward external enemies and away from the Chinese regime.

Truth be told, I'm as financially ambitious as I am socially conscious.



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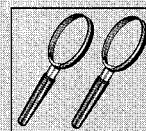
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In a new book called *China: Fragile Superpower*, Susan Shirk of the University of California at San Diego gives a detailed account of occasions when the Chinese government has deliberately drummed up anti-Japanese sentiment—or damped it down, when it seemed to be getting inconveniently robust.

In a country where media and education are as carefully controlled as they are in China, all public opinion is to an extent manufactured. “The students are excited,” a professor at a leading Chinese university told me. “They can be calmed down.” Still, I don’t view anti-Japanese sentiments as a ploy anymore. “You say anything at all about Japan [on a blog or computer bulletin board], and there will be 10,000 posts immediately,” an official of a Chinese high-tech firm told me. “The mob effect can get out of control.”

Partisans of Baidu, the main local search-engine company (which is listed on NASDAQ and has Americans as its main investors) recently ran a blog campaign touting it over Google. One illustration was Google’s supposed inability to return any results for searches on “Nanjing Massacre” (or “Nanking,” the older Western spelling) whereas Baidu returned plenty. There was a technical reason: Google’s servers are outside China and thus must cross the government’s “Great Firewall” to send results to users in China. The firewall routinely screens out references to “massacre,” as in “Tiananmen Square massacre,” and so it blocked Google’s results. Baidu’s servers and resources are all inside the firewall, and have been pre-scrubbed to remove references to Tiananmen and other prohibited topics. Google has since made adjustments so that it too can report on Nanking, but the episode showed the sensitivity of the issue.

The main trigger for renewed Chinese protest against Japan has been the (idiotic) persistence of Junichiro Koizumi, Japan’s former prime minister, in paying ceremonial visits to Yasukuni Shrine, in Tokyo, where fourteen Class-A war criminals from World War II are among the 2.5 million Japanese war dead the shrine honors. Koizumi recently stepped down after five years in office, but his successor, Shinzo Abe, has refused to rule out continuing the visits. When I’ve asked Chinese students what they want from

Japan, they often say an end to the Yasukuni visits and “an apology.” Formal apologies have in fact been offered many times by Japanese officials, and even by the current emperor. If the Chinese are looking for something like German-style ongoing contrition, this is not in the cards. Twentieth-century history, as taught in Japan, holds that Japan itself was the ultimate victim of the “Great Pacific War,” because of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

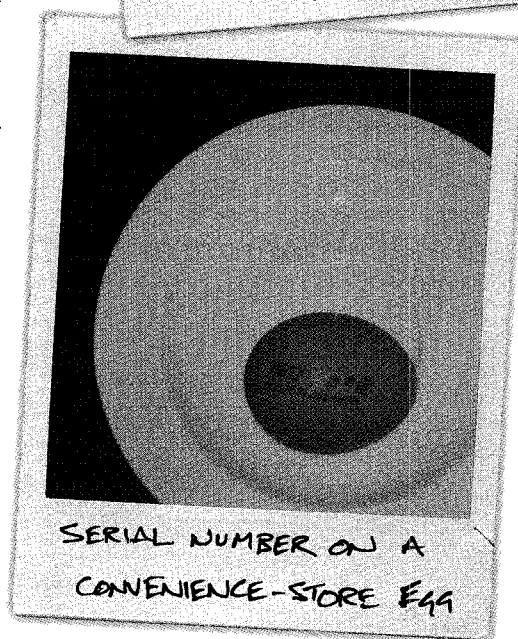
There is one tantalizing further twist to the syndrome. When I have asked young people why they should be so wrapped up with events seventy years in the past, the reply is some variant of: “We Chinese are students of history.” There are certain phrases you hear so often that you know they can’t be true, at least not at face value. Yes, China’s years of subjugation by Western countries and Japan obviously still matter. But

the history that is more recent but less often discussed is that of the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, when the parents of today’s college students were sent into the countryside and often forced to denounce their own parents. In an eloquent new book called *Chinese Lessons*, John Pomfret of *The Washington Post* recounts the ways that his classmates from Nanjing University, where he was an exchange student in the early 1980s, bore the emotional and even moral imprint of those years. They’d been made to do things they knew were wrong, and they found ways to rationalize away that knowledge. So far every student gathering I’ve been to has included a volunteered reference to the evil Japanese, and none has included

a reference to the evils of Chairman Mao (whose picture is still on every denomination of paper money) and his Cultural Revolution.

CAUTION TWO: WATCH OUT, OLYMPIANS!

If you’ve ever doubted the impact of big international spectacles, consider the examples of Beijing and Shanghai. Beijing will of course host the Olympic Games in less than two years; Shanghai will have a World’s Fair in 2010. In Japan, I often heard that the 1964 Olympics represented a turning point in world opinion. I saw a similar effect in South Korea during preparations for its 1988 Olympic Games. In



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the mid-1980s a countdown clock in Seoul's main square showed the number of days until the Olympic opening ceremony. The clock was a dramatic sight during the antigovernment protests of 1987, when the number of days remaining was barely visible through drifting tear gas.

I've seen countdown clocks in Beijing, Shanghai, and Qingdao, the coastal city that gave its name (with a different English spelling) to Tsingtao Beer and where the Olympic sailing events will be held. China certainly seems to be taking the spectacles as a major turning point. Posters with morale-building slogans are everywhere—and the English versions that appear beneath the Chinese characters are often touching. (This is the place to say: While trying hard, I still have no working command of spoken Chinese, and rely on interpreters. I can generally read posters or newspaper headlines, because of similarities with written Japanese.) "If the world gives us a chance, we will return it many splendors," says the English line of an Olympic poster in Shanghai. The English on Qingdao's poster says, "Civilized Qingdao Greeting the Olympic Games."

The construction and refurbishing under way for the Olympics and the World's Fair are phenomenal. Shanghai has five functioning subway lines now—and functioning very well, with better features than I have seen on any public-transportation system anywhere in America. (Plasma screens in all stations show the seconds until the next train's arrival;

a serious haze. But I've never, even in the worst ozone-alert days of my youth, seen anything like Beijing.

There are reasons for its problems: Beijing, like Los Angeles, sits in a sun-baked basin that traps pools of air. There are also solutions. Big industrial plants are being moved out of town, and everyone assumes that when the time comes for the Games, the authorities will do whatever they have to—closing factories, banning private traffic—to bring pollution down to an endurable level. On my first drive into the city from its Capital Airport, in the summer of 1986, I saw pathetic little rows of saplings. Now impressive stands of trees line that same route. Throughout the city, gardens and green spots have been created, and they appear to survive. *Still*. If the marathon runners, or even the archers, can finish their events without clutching their chests and keeling over, the Chinese authorities will have accomplished something special.

CAUTION THREE: WATCH OUT, AMERICA!

One thing I have learned through travel is that every country is unhappy with its school system. The reasons for unhappiness in America are familiar. In Japan, China, and South Korea, the complaint is that memorization for national university-admissions

I think I've seen the answer to China's education problem—and in a way, to America's. It is to make sure that young Chinese people keep coming to the United States—some for college, and very large numbers for graduate school and for work.

an advanced E-ZPass-style fare system lets you pay with one card for subways, buses, taxis, and ferries; LCD screens in the subway cars show entertaining short advertising videos; there is cell-phone coverage in the subways and just about everywhere in Chinese cities; etc.) The city is supposed to have *thirteen* lines by 2010. During several days in Beijing, I found it hard to look anywhere without seeing a road, sewer, stadium, or hotel being built.

Many aspects of the new, improved China will be up for the world's inspection during the Olympic Games. But there is one little catch: the air. Unless something radical changes, I do not understand how athletic events can take place in air as dirty as Beijing's. I am not a sissy: I grew up outside Los Angeles and have been to Mexico City, Bangkok, and other environmental hellholes. During the first few weeks my wife and I were in Shanghai, we wondered whether the pollution talk was all a big scare, since the skies were beautiful and blue. Then the typhoons that had been freshening the air-flow over China (and drowning thousands of people in the southern provinces) petered out, and Shanghai developed

exams creates a generation of unimaginative zombies who are so overstressed by the time they reach college that they sleep, shop, or play video games through the next four years. "America is heaven until you are eighteen," a Chinese professor said, using a slogan I later heard from others. "China is hell." Despite a memorization-and-exam system as onerous as any country's, South Korea is enjoying a vogue right now as a source of creativity. Its cartoons, its televised soap operas, its clothing fashions, even its Samsung mobile phones are popular in both China and Japan. South Korea's recent pizzazz, however it has been achieved, has only intensified long-standing and often-voiced dismay in China and Japan over how to make their students not just technically competent but also "imaginative" and "creative." The distress is particularly acute in China, because, contrary to what most Americans would assume, the Chinese government spends



so little on education, and so much of what it spends is concentrated on a handful of elite schools. Overall, China spends just over 3 percent of its gross domestic product on education at all levels, about half as much as the average for developed countries. "Most of the money goes to the top ten schools, and what goes to the top ten mainly goes to the top few," a professor at one of the favored schools told me. This makes getting into the "best" name-brand schools—like Tsinghua and Peking universities in Beijing, and Fudan and Jiao Tong in Shanghai—all the more important, which in turn increases the need for students to cram for tests and the advantage for those who go to high-fee private high schools.

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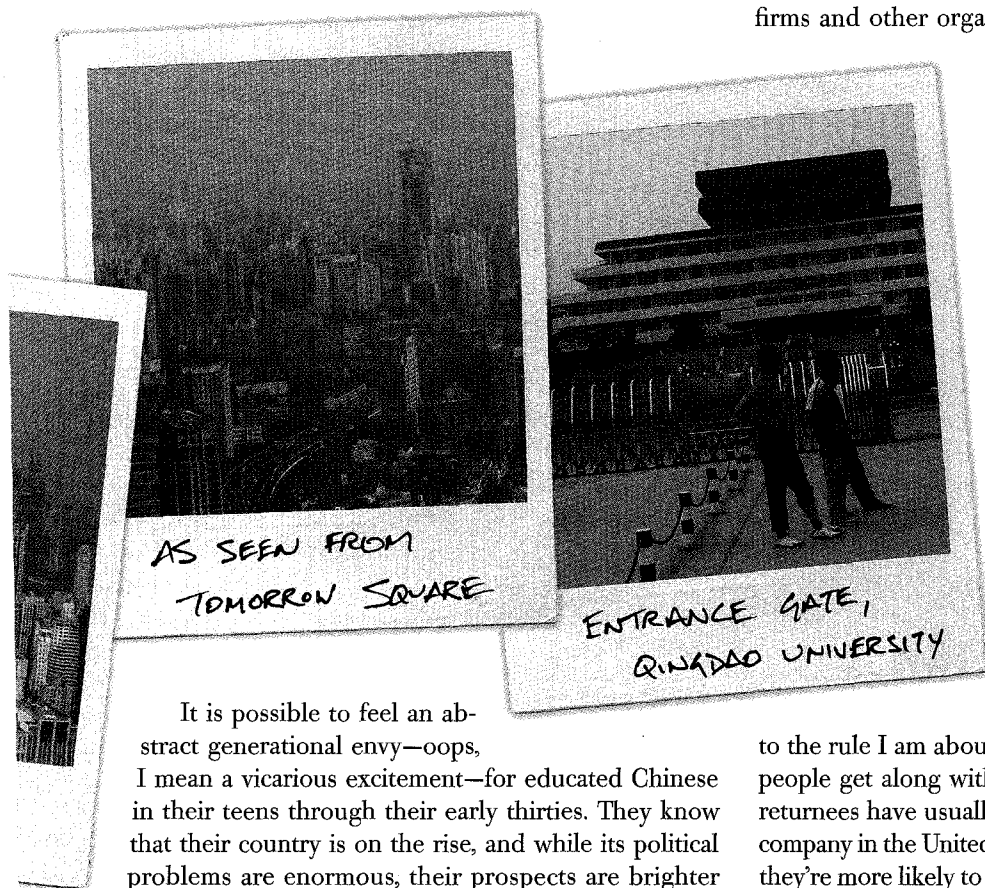
has greatly contributed to innovation and enterprise there. Young Americans who served overseas during World War II or in the Peace Corps in the 1960s had a lasting effect on America's relations with the world—and the hordes of young Mandarin-speaking Americans I keep bumping into in China could do the same.

The tribe of "returnee Chinese" seems very important to today's China. My impression may be skewed, since I have met so many of these people at universities and in technology or financial companies. But I think anyone would find them, on average, a formidable group. From growing up in China, they learned (apart from the language) how to operate in this culture. From being in the United States, many of them learned (apart from the language) traits still very difficult to cultivate in China itself. These include professional managerial skills; the idea of open academic debate, even with one's elders; techniques for funding start-up firms and other organizational structures that encourage innovation; and a sense that bribery, petty or grand-scale, is at least in principle wrong.

And most of them seem to have liked the process. The African students who trooped to Moscow and Beijing in the 1960s and '70s often returned grumbling about mistreatment and racism; Americans who spend time in Japan often come away with love-hate feelings because of that culture's exclusiveness. Chinese returnees, based on all available evidence, are at least subconsciously pro-American. They have made friends and followed sports teams; many have raised culturally Americanized children. Despite obvious differences of culture and language, and despite obvious exceptions

to the rule I am about to propound: on the whole Chinese people get along with Americans, and vice versa. Because returnees have usually been part of either a university or a company in the United States, when they come back to China they're more likely to think of working with General Motors (a huge success here and the leading automaker, with the locally manufactured Buick its most prestigious brand) or UCLA than with the counterparts from Japan or Europe.

If I were China's economic czar, I would recycle as many of the country's dollar holdings as possible on grad-school fees in the United States. And if I were America's immigration czar, I would issue visas to Chinese applicants as fast as I could, recognizing that they will create more jobs, opportunities, and friends for America than the United States could produce any other way for such modest cost. Many Americans will nod along with this point in principle. I would have, too, a few weeks ago. I'm saying that I feel it viscerally now, having met some of these people and begun to see



It is possible to feel an abstract generational envy—oops, I mean a vicarious excitement—for educated Chinese in their teens through their early thirties. They know that their country is on the rise, and while its political problems are enormous, their prospects are brighter than for any previous generation in the long history of their culture.

Within this favored group there is a smaller set that seems particularly fortunate. These are the native-born Chinese who have spent a few years studying or working in the United States. An American software entrepreneur I met here (when he was visiting his company's subsidiary in Hangzhou) explained his theory that modern economies and cultures are driven by "tribes" of people on the move. The tribe of Jewish scientists and intellectuals who fled Hitler transformed America's intellectual life after World War II; the tribe of graduates from the Indian Institute of Technology is heavily represented in Silicon Valley and

their role in China. And to hear them say that their younger counterparts are going instead to Australia, England, or even Japan because of U.S. visa restrictions makes me want to say: America, wake up and watch out!

CAUTION FOUR: WATCH OUT, EVERYONE!

It is too bad that “land of contrasts” is such a cliché, for there are situations in which it would be handy. Trying to make sense of the combination of rigid control and the near-complete chaos the newcomer sees in China is one of those.

I don’t mean to sound flip, because one side of this contrast, the regime’s repression and authoritarian controls, is a grave matter. Apart from its effect within China, it is likely to be the main source of friction between the United States and China for years to come. Every day’s paper since I’ve come to Shanghai, and every hour’s set of blogs, has brought news of some fresh assertion of state control. An internationally famous activist named Chen Guangcheng, blind since childhood, was convicted on charges of “organizing a mob to obstruct traffic” after he protested official misconduct. (Famous elsewhere, but not in China; I have found that few university students recognize his name, since Chinese media did not highlight his case.) Ching Cheong, a reporter from Hong Kong, was sentenced to five years in prison on apparently trumped-up charges of espionage.

Until I installed a “proxy server,” which allows my computer to tunnel under and around the “Great Firewall,” I was amazed at the parts of the Internet I could not reach from China. Technorati.com, for no obvious reason. Wikipedia. Both sites were mysteriously unblocked in October, but then I had trouble with Google News. One URL I can always reach is the central government’s very useful official Web site, www.gov.cn, which has an English page. Naturally it highlights the upbeat: a white paper on “China’s Peaceful Development Road” has as its first chapter, “Peaceful Development Is the Inevitable Way for China’s Modernization.” But, to its credit, it also includes announcements of the latest restrictions on commerce, banking, and the news media.

A list of the tensions between individual rights and the interests of the state could be very long. On the other hand: at least on brief exposure, urban China hardly feels like a hyper-controlled or over-policed society. You can arrive at the Beijing or Shanghai airport thirty-five minutes before a scheduled domestic flight without needing to break into a nervous sweat. Few police are in evidence at the airport, and

the security lines are short. (This is not because air travel is such a rarefied, elite taste in China. Fares are relatively low, and the China Eastern Airlines shuttle flight I took from Shanghai to Beijing was a 747 with all seats filled.) Every instant of life in East Germany under the Communists or in Burma under its ruling generals reminded you that Big Brother was in control. Walking down Shanghai’s main shopping boulevards, Huaihai and Nanjing roads, makes you think you are in one vast bazaar. You can hardly walk a block in Shanghai without passing a vendor selling pirated movie DVDs, for less than \$1 apiece. Viewing these has given me my first inklings of sympathy for the Motion Picture Association of America: I never have to spend much for a movie in China, but the versions of movies I can see are terrible. I missed *The Da Vinci Code* in America and bought a copy here. The dialogue had been dubbed into Chinese, and then subtitled back into English—sort of. When Tom Hanks is told that descendants of Jesus and Mary Magdalene might still be alive, he asks incredulously, “BE? They on the hoof?”

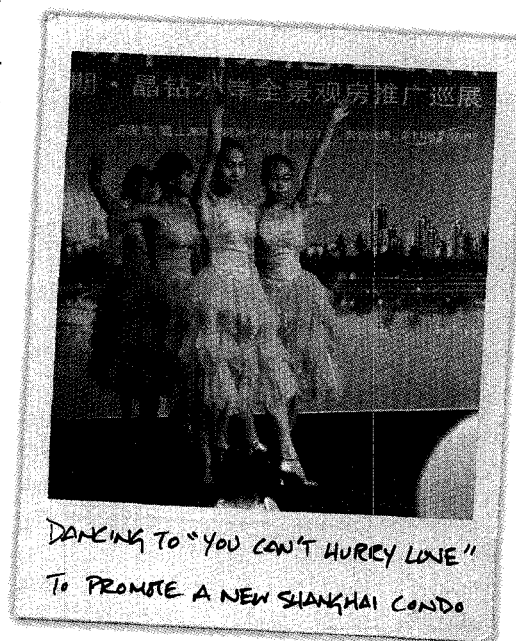
I have not before been anyplace that seemed simultaneously so controlled and so out of control. The control is from on high—and for most people in the cities, most of the time, it’s not something they bump into. What’s out of control is everything else.

Often this is in a good way. On an evening walk down a side street that looked little changed since the 1930s, my wife and I started noticing that nearly every person we passed was running a business of some sort. This man was riding a bicycle with a towering load of flattened-out cardboard, meant for a scrap dealer. That old woman was weaving together rice straws for a broom, helped by her toddler

granddaughter who handed her straws. A middle-aged woman sat outside her house working on a sewing machine. A vendor who looked as if he had just trudged in from the countryside tottered along with a heavy yoke across his shoulders, balancing two heavy baskets full of peaches. Another man was selling crickets in tiny individual straw cages. It makes you marvel at Mao’s delusion in thinking that China could be a centrally planned economy rather than a beehive of commerce.

One reason why Americans typically find China less “foreign” than Japan is that in Japan the social controls are internalized, through years of training in one’s proper role in a group, whereas China seems like a bunch of individuals who behave

themselves only when they think they might get caught. As I took an airport bus from downtown Tokyo to the distant Narita International Airport for the trip to Shanghai, the



squadron of luggage handlers who had loaded the bus lined up, bowed in unison, and chanted safe-travel wishes to the bus as it departed. When I arrived in Shanghai, I saw teenaged airport baggage handlers playfully slapping each other and then being told by the foreman to get back to work. In Japan, the controls are built in; in China, they appear to be bolted on.

A less attractive side of China's social bargain comes in public encounters. Life on the sidewalk or subway may have been what Thomas Hobbes had in mind with his "war of every man against every man." As technology, Shanghai's subway is marvelous; as sociology, it makes you despair. Every person getting on a subway understands that there will be more room if people inside can get off. Yet the more crowded the station, the more certain that there will be a line-of-scrimmage standoff as the people trying to surge in block those trying to escape. In a perverse way, I was relieved when I read that China's traffic-death rate per mile driven was nearly ten times as high as America's: I wasn't crazy in thinking that the streets were a reckless free-for-all. The writer Gwynne Dyer recently explained that such carnage is typical of cultures where virtually everyone behind a wheel is a "first-generation driver," raised with no exposure to traffic laws, defensive driving, or the damage cars can do. As more Chinese travel abroad as tourists, and China prepares to welcome more foreign travelers when the Olympics begin, the government has launched a "mind your manners" campaign urging people to stop "hawking" (noisily clearing their throats) and spitting on the street, to stop cutting to the front of lines, and to stop yelling at each other and into their mobile phones. Good luck!

The climate is that of the frontier, with an erratically vigilant sheriff showing up from time to time to crack heads. The untamed energies of individual Chinese have obviously helped the country grow, but some people have argued to me that the lack of Japanese-style collective virtues imposes limits on China. "We have a huge economy," the founder of a Chinese software company told me at dinner one night. "But we don't have any big companies. Why is that?" Depending on how it's measured, China's economy is either the third-, fourth-, or fifth-largest in the world. But only three mainland Chinese companies are among the top 500 in *Forbes's* list of international companies, with the largest, PetroChina, at No. 57.

This man's answer was that scale requires trust, and "there is no trust in China." People don't trust others outside their family, he said. "They don't trust the Internet. Or

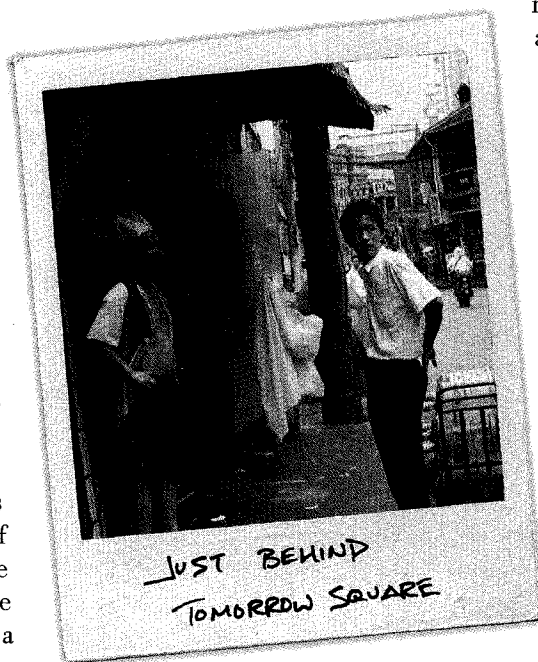
doctors. Or the mobile-phone company to bill them honestly. Or, of course, the government." Building a company beyond the family scale requires many layers of trust: in accountants, underwriters, the financial markets, the rule of law. "People are all looking for the profit in the next two years, so they cannot grow," this man concluded. Would his company list shares on the stock exchange? "Ha!" he said. "The economy keeps growing, and the stock market keeps falling." The big problem for the markets is what financiers call "lack of transparency"—that is, the difficulty in knowing whether a given firm is making or losing money, and the suspicion that it is keeping several sets of books.

"Corruption, corruption, corruption!" another technology executive exclaimed to me. "You could knock off a hundred corrupt officials a day and you would not make a dent." To take just one indica-

tive example: High government officials have recently found it desirable to be "scholarly." Thus universities have become accustomed to dignitaries who attend a few classes and soon get a Ph.D. Japan has always had its scandals—I was living there when police found gold bars and \$50 million in the home and offices of Shin Kanemaru, a backstairs power in the ruling party. The most famous South Korean CEOs of the 1980s ended up in jail. But those countries—unlike Russia, the Philippines, or Indonesia—manage to keep their corruption within the "efficient" range, where it will not impede the growth of business. So far, China's corruption must also have been kept efficient—how else could the country have come so far so fast? But I've been surprised to hear how often corruption is mentioned as a major long-term threat.

And now we confront Two Great Mysteries of China, which concern its leadership and its ideals. I'm not referring to a host of Minor Mysteries I hope to comprehend over time. For instance, the miracle of the malls: how so much of Shanghai's showy new retail malls can be occupied by Prada, Armani, or Louis Vuitton stores—the real ones, not counterfeits—when there appear never, ever to be any customers inside. Who pays the rent? Or the miracle of the loaves: every run-down neighborhood has a bakery selling very good croissants and baguettes (though it is very hard to find cheese in China, which after all has no dairy-food tradition, and where a standard knock against Westerners is that they "smell like butter"). I am after bigger game.

Of course, it can seem preposterous for a newcomer even to raise such points, as if a foreigner in America observed that the country "is divided along party lines" and "has racial problems." But here are two of the many themes I want to know more about.



THE FIRST GREAT MYSTERY OF CHINA: HOW SKILLFUL IS THE LEADERSHIP?

Everyone wants to know how long the Chinese economic boom can go on. Will an environmental crisis stop it? What about the gap between rich and poor? And between big shots on the take and peasants kicked off their land? After all, a nearly unbelievable 87,000 “public order disturbances” took place in China last year, according to China’s own Public Security Ministry, up from an already alarming 58,000 in 2003. What about the contradiction between a rollicking market system and an intrusive, controlling, one-party state? And what about a hundred other concerns amply documented in studies from China and around the world?

These are all ways of asking: Can China continue to adapt? In adaptability, Chinese society as a whole puts the rest of the world to shame. Flower vendors and restaurateurs discovered that celebrating a Western-style Valentine’s Day increased their sales. Now the local florists pro-

mote one on the 14th of every month. One alley near our apartment is lined with shops offering turtles, fish, puppies and kittens, and birds as pets. On the next street over, most of the same creatures are offered as food. Whatever sells.

The Communist Party that sits atop this society has been both adaptable and rigid. In the nearly thirty years since Deng Xiaoping introduced “Socialism with Chinese characteristics,” aka capitalism under Communist political control, party leaders have adapted their

way around one potentially ruinous difficulty after another. Even what the rest of the world sees as their most grievous mistake—the brutal crackdown at Tiananmen Square—was, from the regime’s perspective, another success. Without it, they might well have been driven from power. And the international denunciation did not seriously slow the country’s economic growth.

China’s continued growth depends on businesses, both homegrown and foreign—but the conditions for the growth are still set by the commissars. Even in the relatively laissez-faire United States, the commissars of the Federal Reserve constantly try to find the interest-rate level that will let the economy grow without causing inflation. The equation the Chinese planners have to solve is much more complex, involving everything from pollution to currency controls to maintaining social order while exerting control.

As for pollution: How much can they allow without absolutely destroying the countryside? How much can they

prohibit without hurting their big export businesses? Even if they want to clean up, can they enforce regulations that restrain polluting activities, when so many provincial authorities have so much graft to gain by approving the next freeway, toxic-waste dump, or coal-fired power plant?

As for trade frictions with the United States, the finance ministry has made a start toward wiggling its way out. By letting the yuan’s value rise very slowly against the dollar, China has held down the price it pays for oil and other imported commodities, which are priced in dollars—without overpricing its products in the U.S. markets. Senators Charles Schumer and Lindsey Graham frequently threaten to propose trade sanctions on China if it does not let the yuan’s value rise much faster. Several economists I have interviewed here say that being forced to raise the yuan’s value would actually be a huge victory for the Chinese economy. It would drive down import costs even further, and would not do much to reduce exports to America, since many made-in-China goods are simply no longer manufactured in Europe or the United States. Can the Chinese officials work this negotiation to their benefit? My guess is yes.

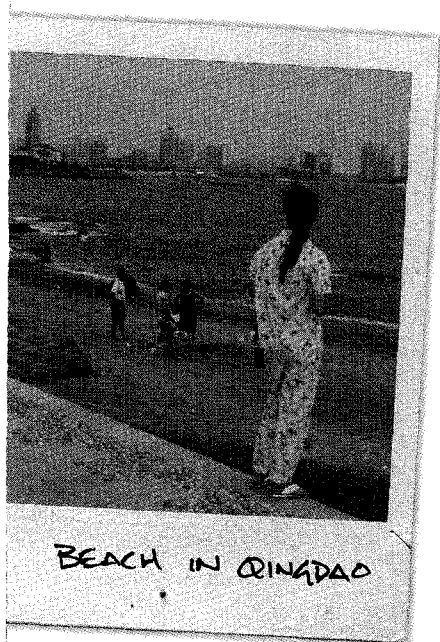
A Western ambassador to China said that the thoroughgoing competence of the seemingly rigid central leadership is China’s least appreciated strength. “They drive you crazy,” he said, “but they get what they want done.” The ambassador went down the list of fourteen countries bordering China and said: “In every case, they’ve built a reasonable relationship.” A similar systematic effectiveness has characterized—so far—most of the country’s economic and social policies.

Can the regime keep it up? Can China manage a giant-scale and much more repressive version of the social contract developed in Singapore? Lee Kuan Yew didn’t call himself a benevolent despot in Singapore, but that’s what he was. He offered prosperity and public order; he quashed dissent. That’s the deal the Chinese leadership would offer the public—if it thought it had to offer explanations. Some people I’ve spoken with—mostly older people, and mostly ones who’ve lived in the West—say that of course the country will become more liberal as it becomes richer. Others—mainly younger ones, and those who’ve never left the country—say it’s not necessarily so. “People get unhappy here when there are famines,” a graduate student in Shanghai told me. “Otherwise we’re not interested in politics.”

Some philosophers, idealists, and ordinary citizens in China are taking risks to prove the student wrong. No one outside the country, and probably no one here, can tell how this process will come out. It turns on the leadership’s skill, in the deepest sense: Can the leaders keep delivering what the country wants?

THE SECOND GREAT MYSTERY OF CHINA: WHAT IS THE CHINESE DREAM?

Holland has a culture, but it does not have a dream. There is no Canadian dream, or Finnish dream. If there is a Japanese dream, the women’s version seems to be to escape their salaryman husbands, and the men’s is to escape the offices where they toil for their salaries.



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The two countries whose cultures can plausibly support the idea of a dream these days are the United States and China. The American dream covers something so elemental in human ambition that people from around the world think it applies to them. The Chinese dream reflects the unprecedented opportunities now open to at least some of this country's 1.3 billion people.

But what exactly will the Chinese dream mean? In three of its aspects—for the individual, for the growing economy, and for Chinese culture and influence in the largest sense—the answer is not yet obvious, at least to me. How exactly the Chinese decide to define and pursue their dream will make a large difference to the rest of the world.

The question about individuals will be: Do they dream of anything more than making money? Americans I've met here tend to sound huffy about the total money-mindedness of today's rising urban Chinese. (Example of what they

mean: A flashy Shanghainese woman in her twenties says, "I almost feel sorry for men these days. If they don't have an apartment, no chance of getting married. With no car—forget it!" Her bargaining position is strengthened by the ghoulish combination of China's one-child policy and its strong cultural preference that the lone child be a boy. Six boy babies are born and survive in China for every five girls. The imbalance is obvious among children on the street and noticeable even for young people now in their twenties, who were born after the one-child policy took hold.) Americans might seem the worst-positioned people on earth to complain about others' materialism. But I sense that beneath the tut-tutting is a question about what modern Chinese people are supposed to believe in at all. The years of the Cultural Revolution must have done something terrible to traditional family loyalties, and after the switch away from Maoist policies, there can't still be many true believers in a socialist ideal. In dramatic contrast to the United States, China has not been a deeply religious society. This leaves, for now, material improvement as a proxy for the meaning of life. Any generalization this broad obviously will be wrong about many individuals. But what, if anything, tomorrow's successful Chinese want beyond a bigger house and better car seems both important and impossible to know.

For the economy as a whole, the question is whether China dreams of matching the consumer-driven American model—or, like Japan before it, establishing a different model of long-term development. America's policy really boils down to the steady effort to give consumers more and more for less and less: deregulation, expanding free trade, embracing Wal-Mart and other chains. Japan's policy has boiled down to a steady effort to develop the country's manufacturing base, even if that left consumers paying higher prices and investors getting worse returns. Different systems, different goals; and Japan, despite its supposed "lost decade," has done a good job—by its own lights. Its current-account surplus, widely predicted to evaporate by the mid-1990s, instead remains the largest in the world in absolute terms. Toyota, which during the "Japan as No. 1" years dreamed of being the world's leading automaker, will very soon be just that. American economists often scold Japan for its "foolish" emphasis on exports and surpluses at the cost of immediate consumer welfare. But no one who visits modern Japan will think its people look poor.

Based on the Maserati dealership around the corner and the amount of gold I see draped around rich women's necks, China is a good long-term candidate for the consumption-driven American model. But based on the steady flow of new regulatory orders from Beijing, the central authorities may have other ideas. For most of recorded history, China was the strongest and richest country, not simply in Asia but in the world. Through sheer force of numbers, it seems likely some day to be the world's richest again. Another suspiciously common slogan is that all China really wants is to achieve a "Peaceful Rise in the World." We will see. ▀

FIVE HOUSEHOLD STATUES OF BUDDHA

The bronze Buddha in our living room,
his eyes closed, his hands resting comfortably
against his inside thighs—
what does he mean to tell me about the river heron?

And the green sleeping Buddha
stretched out upon his side along our poetry bookcase,
serene as a watch fob in his stylized pose—
what is he saying about the price of all good things?

What is the black Buddha saying,
sitting on the mantelpiece
as if on a lotus? *If you would not suffer,
you must not desire?*

And the small Tara Buddha
who looks upon the road outside
from the windowsill perch she shares with both our cats—
is she so content I cannot learn from her?

Lastly, the happiness Buddha,
late of China, his round gold stomach glistening
under my fading light—
shall I not trust him to laugh my life into his?

—DICK ALLEN

Dick Allen is the author of six collections of poetry, including The Day Before (2003) and Ode to the Cold War: Poems New and Collected (1997). He lives in Connecticut.



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Striking a Pose

Illustration by Barry Blitt

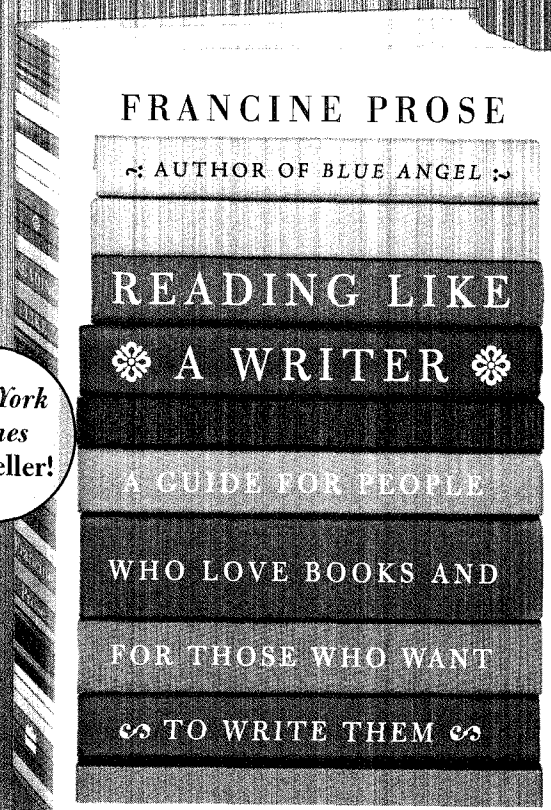
Julia “Butterfly” Hill, the woman who lived on a branch of a redwood for two years to protest logging in ancient forests, is holding court (“I started to do yoga when I got down from the tree”). She is unrecognizable. Instead of her usual worn wool hat, she is sporting a black cocktail dress, a new Winona Ryder pixie cut, and a stylish purse made out of recycled soda tabs. She is trying to sell the reporters on her new project—

Hanna Rosin, an Atlantic contributing editor, is working on a book about young evangelicals.

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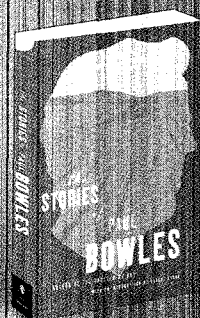
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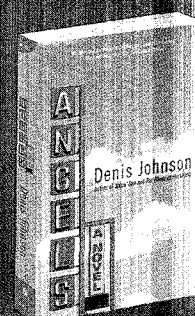
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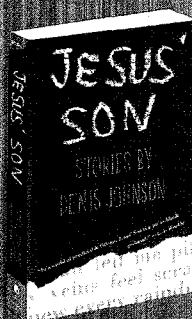
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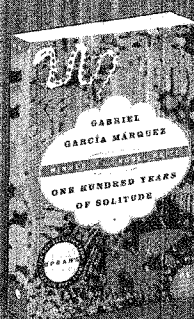
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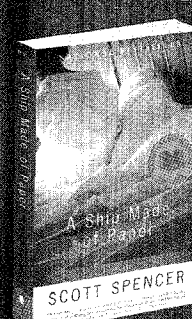
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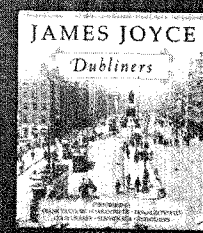
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enlisting the actress Daryl Hannah to help save the South Central Farm in Los Angeles—but they keep coming back to her purse (“Are those real soda tabs? That’s so cool!”).

“Sting!” someone yells, and in he walks, with his wife, Trudie. Sting looks like his just-got-out-of-the-coal-mine self in his washed-out overalls, but Trudie is all glitzed up in a red satin getup and silver spike heels. “Trudie, look this way! Look at me!” the photographers shout, as if it’s a fashion shoot, and she does, expertly turning her head this way and that. At one point an actual Hare Krishna devotee wanders into the VIP room with her robe and her drum, a poor pale soul whose only makeup is a slash of white on her forehead. She’s invited, but she seems like a traveler from a lost era, the last one to have heard the news: in America, yoga has come out of the ashram.

STRETCHING OUT

For at least fifty years, the prophets of California’s communes have told us how much the denatured, stressed-out West needs the curative power of yoga. Now, to their great dismay, the West is listening. No longer does yoga belong to the handful of seekers making their annual pilgrimage to India. It’s everywhere: on every third corner in New York or Los Angeles, and available in any city big enough for a gym or a country club. According to a 2004 Harris study commissioned by *Yoga Journal*, an estimated 15 million Americans do some kind of yoga. The study reported that 25 million more planned to try yoga within the next year—enough to make it as unexotic an Eastern novelty as Chinese food or judo.

In Washington, D.C., where I live, there are now roughly twenty-five yoga studios, many of which opened in the last five years, according to a *Washington Post* survey. They share a growth pattern with Starbucks, and a similar connotation: in a fast-gentrifying city, yoga studio spaces are attached to developers’ fancy new lofts to signal to potential urban pioneers that the neighborhood is more cutting-edge than scary. (“Let’s face it—yoga is something that people with disposable income can do,” one woman, who just moved to the marginal neighborhood of Petworth and is taking classes at a new yoga studio there, told *The Post*.)

I took my first yoga class in the living room of someone who seemed too old to be using saris as window treatments. That was about eight years ago, when it was hard to find a studio and practically the only style of yoga around was one called Iyengar, imported here in the 1970s by the godfather of modern American yoga, B. K. S. Iyengar. I’d worn my running shorts and a Nike shirt and quickly realized my mistake: in this room the body was a temple, and common exercise gear was proof that you’d defiled it. After class the teacher pulled me aside to say she couldn’t properly see my alignment in the loose clothes; she suggested I wear something else. Like what? I asked. She pointed to a picture of Iyengar himself floating on one hand. As far as I could tell, he was wearing a black cloth diaper. I wasn’t sure what would count as the matching top.

Now I do yoga at an airy, lavender-painted studio called Down Dog in Georgetown, Washington’s posh shopping district. Like many of the fast-growing schools of yoga, this

studio’s style is a subset of “flow yoga,” which involves moving quickly from pose to pose while breathing in a regulated way. This particular version is called “power yoga” and is associated with Baron Baptiste, who perfected it while training the Philadelphia Eagles football team in the mid-1990s. On weekends the room is packed with a particular cross section of Washingtonians: students from Georgetown University wearing next to nothing, preppy Georgetown moms with their \$84 lotus-flower pants from the studio’s boutique, men built like bouncers in tight shorts. A couple of former Washington Wizards basketball players come regularly as well, and so does the entire Georgetown lacrosse team.

Once the door shuts on the heated-to-90-degrees room, you are in for a combination of basic training and morning chapel. It begins with a grueling routine not meant for the contemplative. (By the end of class some of us find ourselves in a literal puddle of sweat, even though we’d laid down towels beforehand.) Usually, toward the end, the teacher offers what can only be described as bits of a sermon in which, in another context, the word *Jesus* would not be out of place: “Trust in the higher power,” the instructor will say, as you’re contorted into some excruciating pose designed to open your hips. “Your mat is a sacred place.” “This studio is your sanctuary.” “Find grace! Feel the possibility of that which is greater!”

Although we are a society known for creative multitasking, it seems odd that we have mixed up our gym and our church. Monks once flagellated themselves in hopes of getting to heaven, and it’s true that once or twice the image of Silas, the naked self-whipping monk assassin in *The Da Vinci Code*, has popped into my head while I was holding a particularly difficult pose. But Silas was deferring his pleasure until after death, whereas I’m just deferring mine until after class. Where older religions promised heaven, the church of yoga promises quicker, more practical, earthly gratification, in the form of better heart rates and well-toned arms.

The yogis say people come to class to get fit, but wind up answering a more urgent call. “There is a deeper spiritual hunger for something larger than ourselves, which is many times not answered by organized religion in 2006,” says John Friend, another yoga celebrity, who founded one of the fastest-growing styles of yoga, called Anusara. But yogis have been saying such things to Americans since the nineteenth century. In fact, yoga had to wait until now, when our spiritual hunger runs a little more shallow, to reach the American mainstream. We’re attracted to self-denying faiths of all kinds—Islam, Latin-Mass Catholicism, traditional Judaism. But we tend to take what suits us and discard the rest. Young Muslim women choose to wear the veil in defiance of their more assimilated parents. Jewish Buddhists can meditate for hours on the souls of insects and rocks but still eat their pastrami and rye. In this atmosphere you can pick up some of the old familiar language—“higher power,” “grace”—and layer on some incense, and no one will feel confused, or threatened.

Even being “New Age” doesn’t require particular effort anymore. You can find twelve-step programs at evangelical megachurches, and holistic language on every label at Whole Foods. When a Jivamukti teacher says she practices yoga as

her lifestyle, she means something involving great sacrifice: she meditates every morning at six, doesn't eat meat or wear fur, and applies the yogic moral code of *ahimsa*—Do no harm—to all of her life. For the rest of us, though, yoga is like Red Bull: a midday pick-me-up for the body and mind. In a world where Butterfly Hill is a fashion trendsetter, yoga is no longer a spiritual antidote to the upscale Western lifestyle; it's just the latest manifestation.

THE 'YOGA PRINCE'

Baron Baptiste adjusts his headset and steps up on the platform for a better view. About 150 people have come here to the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York, for his famous "Personal Revolution" workshop, and they are awaiting his instructions. He starts them off in the classic yoga pose, downward-facing dog. "Your thighs are enthusiastic," he says. "Your belly is in."

I'd come here to see what a guru in the New New Age is like, and Baptiste is a perfect example. He is often described as a "yoga prince," because his parents were yoga pioneers in San Francisco. But he looks more like a white rapper, in his trademark B-boy bandana and a T-shirt and long shorts—all black except for the red Nike swoosh. "This is your whole life, right here in this breath," he says, between calling out the poses. "This is it."

As he speaks, heavenly women in tight T-shirts with Baptiste mottos (DROP WHAT YOU KNOW; SUFFERING IS OPTIONAL) come around and adjust, massage, and lift various parts of your body, like angelic nurses in a room full of war wounded. Baptiste's pattern is to send the class soaring into a mental and physical high, and then, when he's at the brink of New Age hokum, reel it back with some bit of self-deprecation or irony. "You're going to be so powerful this weekend," he says. "And I'm the jerk who's going to make you powerful."

Baptiste grew up as the son of the Bay Area guru Walt Baptiste, the 1949 Mr. America and co-founder (with his wife, Magaña) of the Yoga Philosophic Health Center. He was raised around incense and chanting monks and tins of Indian herbs and hundreds of devotees coming to sit at his father's feet. Now he thinks of that as so much dust in the attic. "People have so many weird associations with yoga," he says. "A lot of that 'yoga-nese' just turns people away. So I just simplified it, invented a new language. I was a pioneer in bringing yoga to the masses in the mid-'90s. No one was talking the way I was talking."

Baptiste banished some of the Hindu and Hare Krishna associations and made yoga Christian-friendly, quoting Jesus and biblical scripture in his lectures and interviews. He declined the title of "guru." "A guru is someone who says, 'Follow me.' But Americans don't like to be led, to be told what to do." Instead, he describes himself as "a coach. A dialoguing coach, because it's about a conversation between me and my students."

In the early '90s, Baptiste would show up in magazines like *Self* and *Cosmo* as one of the yogis to the stars. Then the yoga craze started to peak, and instead of coaching the stars, Baptiste became a kind of star himself, with all the attendant

dysfunction. He joined forces with Maxwell Kennedy, brother of the environmentalist Robert Kennedy Jr., and opened a studio in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Baptiste Power Yoga Institute. It was hugely successful, with 3,000 people coming a week, and a local magazine called the packed Saturday- and Sunday-morning classes a "substitute church service for his loyal Boston following." Five years later the partnership ended in a nasty lawsuit. Baptiste accused Kennedy of "unprofessional" conduct toward female staff and students; Kennedy denied it and accused Baptiste of the exact same bad behavior. Baptiste declined to comment further, though according to his counsel, they settled the lawsuit to everyone's satisfaction. Baptiste's wife and three children moved to Utah during this time, and shortly thereafter he got divorced.

Today, though, Baptiste is floating above all that. It's a clear, bright Saturday morning but, because the blinds are drawn, it might as well be night in this little sanctuary. Baptiste is onstage, with everyone gathered on the floor around him on cushions, looking up. This is when he fulfills his priestly role, leading the audience into faith-healing territory. This is the space where yoga causes miracles—where it cures cancers and prevents suicide and generally saves lives.

"Any of you have any stories of dramatic shifts in your life due to yoga?" he asks. One guy raises his hand to say he was a "raw foodist" and he'd tried everything ("liver, intestinal, gall bladder, colonic"), but nothing worked like Baptiste yoga. "It's like I'm having this insane cleansing," he says. "It's like

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I've found a way to have direct communication with the cells in my body." People talk about losing sixty-five pounds after practicing with Baptiste for a while, about revealing to their parents or partners—after an especially intense session of power yoga—deep secrets they'd never been able to tell. One handsome guy with a crew cut talks about being diagnosed with ADD and put on Ritalin, and then antidepressants, then losing his job, and feeling generally adrift until he came to his first Baptiste yoga class.

ON BEING FIFTY-SOMETHING

after Po Chü-i

From thirty to forty, you are distracted
by the five lusts, which I don't need to go into.
From seventy to eighty, you're prone
to a hundred diseases or more.

Who can remember their names,
or the ones of friends who've gone
and died on you? But, from fifty to sixty,
you're free of all that.

Grief doesn't know where you live yet,
only gravity, the body starting to sag
under the weight of memories that,
like extra pounds around the middle,

you can't seem to lose. At the theater, you doze,
your eyelids curtains that refuse to stay raised.
Suddenly, you're the director of a play
about to begin. Time: no time like the present.

Place: a room you think you recognize.
On the desk, a typewriter squats like a toad,
waiting for a tasty word to devour.
The wall's the wrong color, too cheerful,

but its painted muslin quivers:
from backstage someone tries the door,
which refuses to give. How young you were
when such bright shabbiness was yours,

how like a desert full of dream.

—DEBORA GREGER

*Debora Greger's most recent book of poems is Western Art (2004).
She teaches at the University of Florida at Gainesville.*

Baptiste looks on patiently from the stage and smiles, like a successful surgeon, or rabbi, at peace with his gifts. "You can measure this as the day you started a whole new life," he says. "It's the best day of your life. Yogically speaking, it's your new birthday." And everyone claps—for him and for themselves.

NEW AGE, NEW WORLD

America's first gurus, imported from India, neglected their bodies as a sign of their holiness. When Swami Vivekananda took the boat over from Bombay in 1893 to attend the World's Parliament of Religions, in Chicago, he slept in a boxcar, wore a robe and turban, and begged for his food and lodging. In the streets, people treated him like a circus freak. But he was the star of the parliament: the Transcendentalists, Unitarians, and biblical skeptics in attendance had already begun studying Hindu texts, and Vivekananda gave a more polite and formal version of the kind of "One God" talk—about the "beautiful earth" and sweet harmony and different streams mingling in the great big sea—that would filter down through the New Age movement and ultimately make its way to the parking lots of Grateful Dead shows.

Because of the difficulty of travel and immigration restrictions, very few yogis followed him. But Americans began trekking to ashrams in India and bringing back their spiritual trinkets. Nobody back then thought of yoga as exercise. In the '50s and '60s it was considered either a spiritual practice or an alternative kind of trip, one of the many ways to get high. Allen Ginsberg praised yoga, and in 1968 the Beatles and Mia Farrow made a pilgrimage to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. By the '70s yoga was part of the flotsam of hippie culture ("If you like piña-coladas, and getting caught in the rain / If you're not into yoga, if you have half a brain").

In the '80s and '90s yoga popped up as a West Coast fad. Sting and Raquel Welch were early adopters. Jane Fonda eventually worked it into her fitness routine. Madonna played a yoga teacher in a film, Gwyneth Paltrow bragged about practicing ninety minutes a day, Charlie Sheen took private lessons to lose weight (and presumably to stay clean). In 2001, Christy Turlington was outed on the cover of *Time*, and it seemed everyone had jumped on board: Jerry Seinfeld, Cameron Diaz, Michelle Pfeiffer, Nicolas Cage, David Duchovny, Angelina Jolie, Sarah Jessica Parker, all three Dixie Chicks.

In the meantime, the Baby Boomers were reaching midlife with their joints aching and crises looming. John Abbott was a Citicorp executive and marathon runner who started doing yoga after a knee injury. He bought *Yoga Journal* in 1998, when it was housed in, as he put it, "a dump in Berkeley, very hippie-dippy, dirty lavatories, that kind of thing." It used to be more New Age than yoga, with articles on crystal gazing and trapeze flying and liberal use of the word *consciousness*. Now it's a guidebook to the new yoga nation: a thick glossy with a readership of more than 1 million, printed in cheerful hues of melon and saffron and lime. The new generation of yoga entrepreneurs—Lululemon Athletica, Yoga Works, Caiam—compete for attention on its increasingly numerous ad pages. Meanwhile, mainstream companies—Chevy, Toyota, Nike, Quaker, Eileen Fisher—try for a piece of the well-toned demographic.

Abbott is trim and fit, and on the day I interviewed him in the magazine's new downtown San Francisco office, he was dressed in soothing light blues and grays. When he bought the magazine he was new to publishing, but he learned quickly. Once he tried running a cover story titled "Life Without Sex," but that issue's newsstand sales were among the lowest in the magazine's recent history. The day I visited, the editors were laying out the antidote: a feature on "Sex and Yoga," with a photo of a couple in bed; she's straddling him, her long, lithe back is bare, her thick curly hair trailing down it. The staff debated whether this was too much, but then decided it was OK because this couple was married, and both were real yogis. "We have to thread the needle," Abbott told me. "Things have gotten so mainstream that we want to appeal to broad consumer interest, but still keep the depth and integrity." Then he disappeared into a meeting about ad revenues.

When the old yogis complain about commercialization, who can blame them? Gucci sells a yoga mat and matching bag for \$655. Companies use famous yogis and yoga lingo to advertise cereal, beer, and Hormel pork-loin fillets. *Jane* magazine's new ad shows a foxy blonde: "She practices yoga," reads the caption. "She's perfected the keg stand." Yoga is at a confused, precarious place, teetering on the edge of over-exposure. On my way to the Jivamukti party I stumbled on a tiny store in the ultrahip Lower East Side called Fuck Yoga, which features store-branded T-shirts, matchbooks, skateboards, and neon signs. I figured this was my proof that yoga had indeed crossed over to the dark side, becoming a close cousin to the SUV and the fur coat and dental insurance—all the eternal targets of youthful mockery and protest.

So was this all meant in hostility to yoga? I asked Fuck Yoga's owner, Barnaby Harris, thinking I was asking the obvious.

"No, not at all," he said, "I practice yoga every day. And we sell yoga mats."

You do? So what the—?

"Enough already," said Harris. "I mean, OK, [yoga's] great for you, makes you glowing and healthy, etc., etc. But enough already." (The store also sells T-shirts that say FUCK FRANK CEHRY. Same basic idea.)

THE HERE AND NOW

So yoga may be overexposed and commercialized. But that doesn't mean we're all hypocrites. This is not the '60s, not an age of ideological purity. What harm can it do if a rich couple in Beverly Hills wants to fund yoga for East L.A. schools, or if a psychiatrist prescribes yoga to one of his patients? It's a tepid approach, perhaps, but it's harmless, and maybe even a little bit cheering. If anything major is lost, it's a sense of abandon. Yoga hurries the trend of what Christopher Lasch called "the corruption of sports," where "[g]ames quickly lose part of their charm when pressed into the service of education, character development, or social improvement," as he wrote in a 1977 essay.

Yet the abandon is still there, if you know where to find it. Late in the evening at the Jivamukti party, after all the concerts and speeches, the buzz dies down. Sting is gone;

so is Trudie. Russell Simmons and Kimora Lee, Simmons's diva wife (they are reportedly separated), have gotten tired of sitting cross-legged on little folded blankets. Baptiste is gone too. There are yoga celebrities here, but they're of the old-school kind, known only to real insiders.

This is the authentic Jivamukti, which better than most studios seems to effortlessly, unself-consciously hold odd things together: the fun and the overly earnest, the fringe and the impossibly trendy. The whole staff once posed in one of those PETA ads ("We'd rather go naked than wear fur") and made it look like the Princeton Nude Olympics. The Jivamukti teacher who taught my class that afternoon looked like a fourteen-year-old's fantasy of a camp counselor: blonde and tan and a little mysterious, a party girl with a serious side.

Just before midnight, Michael Franti is singing his jokey reggae, and everyone's dancing. Now that the paparazzi are gone, Uma Thurman has finally turned up, in the back of the crowd. Her brother teaches at Jivamukti (he's the central Jesus figure in the naked ad), and her father is an eminent scholar of Buddhism. Some stars are less overwhelming in real life than on screen, but Uma is not one of them. In a cotton dress and a long cream-colored cashmere sweater, she is some fabulous combination of gigantic and gossamer-light. For the rest of the night she stands next to a podium, perfectly at home, instant-messaging on her cell phone, swaying a little to Franti's music, and you think: this is the only place in the whole country where—for a night at least—her celebrity is irrelevant. ■

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—*Publishers Weekly*

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—*New York Times*

Baking

"Baking at its best."—*Publishers Weekly*,
starred review

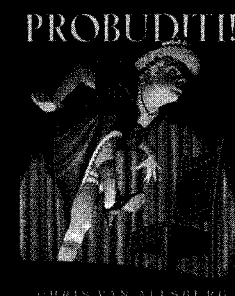
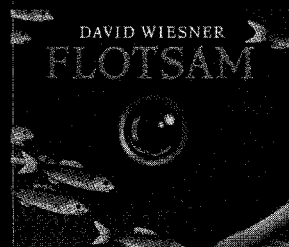
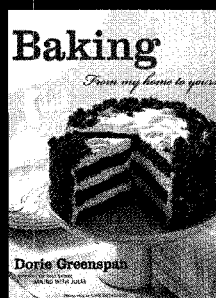
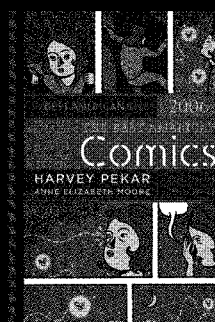
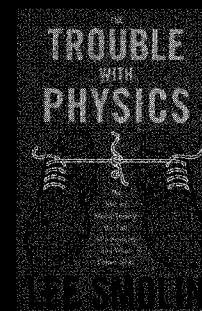
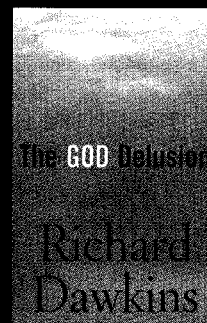
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THE CRITICS

Books, Manners, Mores

DECEMBER 2006 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

THIS MONTH

WALT DISNEY: The Triumph of the American Imagination

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OF SEX AND MARRIAGE

Stop it, you're killing my libido
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TRUE NORTH

A career-spanning anthology reveals again why Alice Munro is the living writer most likely to be read in a hundred years
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THE VIEW FROM CASTLE ROCK

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OUT OF CHARACTER

On Richard Ford's latest
by Joseph O'Neill

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RICH MAN'S BURDEN

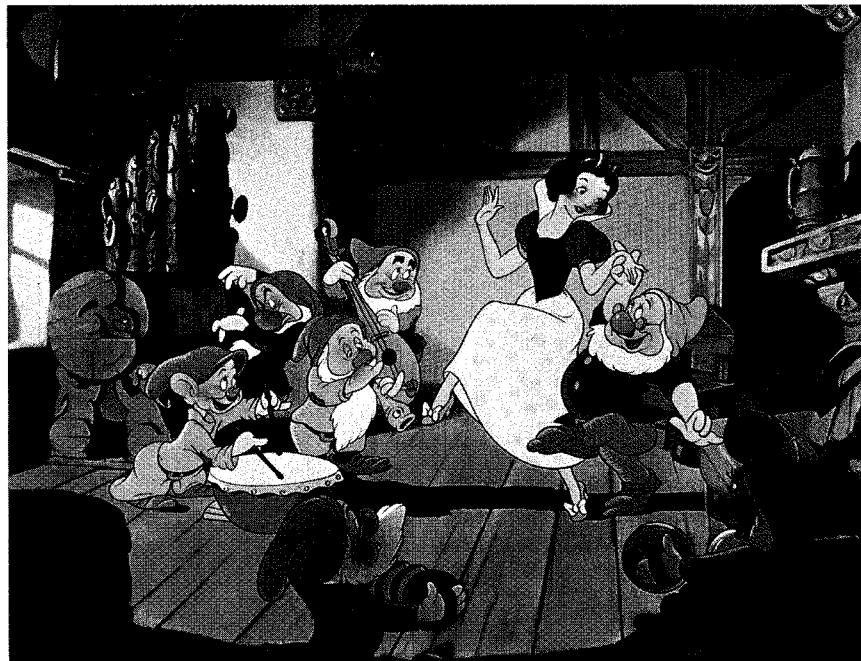
The steely resolve of Andrew Carnegie
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Walt's World

What to read this month

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ



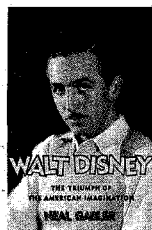
For better and for worse, Walt Disney (1901–1966) implanted his creations more profoundly and pervasively in the national psyche than has any other figure in the history of American popular culture. When the young cartoonist—a product of the worn-down midwestern petite bourgeoisie and of wearisome childhood toil—had his first popular character, Oswald the Rabbit, stolen from him by his film distributor, in 1928, he quickly, in desperation, created a new protagonist: Mickey Mouse. By the early 1930s, a million audiences were watching Mickey Mouse cartoons each year. In 1934, in the depths of the Depression, The Mouse's image adorned more than forty items, from diamond bracelets to blackboards, bringing in \$35 million in

domestic sales alone. A year earlier, Disney had released *Three Little Pigs*, an eight-minute cartoon that was universally regarded as a populist parable of the Depression. It entranced the country; FDR quoted it; dozens of articles dissected it. Its theme song, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?," became, along with "Happy Days Are Here Again," an anthem of the decade. And of course, this was just the beginning. To millions of Americans, a truculent Donald Duck symbolized the good fight against the Axis ("Der Fuehrer's Face," the hit song to Disney's most popular cartoon, was the wartime counterpart to "Big Bad Wolf").

Disney then gave the postwar generation its deepest common cultural experiences. The releases of *Cinderella*,

WALT DISNEY CO.

Peter Pan, *Lady and the Tramp*, *Mary Poppins*, and *101 Dalmatians*—and the rereleases of *Snow White*, *Bambi*, *Pinocchio*, and *Dumbo* (probably Disney Studio's finest feature)—were among the most universally and vividly experienced childhood events of the American middle class. *The Mickey Mouse Club* helped raise the children of the 1950s (and supplied Boomers with their own anthem). The broadcasts, on the television show *Disneyland*, of *Davy Crockett* (the first miniseries)



WALT DISNEY
The Triumph
of the American
Imagination
by Neal Gabler
Knopf

spurred the biggest kids' fad of the decade, as the "coonskin" cap (10 million of which were sold) became the central element of the middle-class boy's uniform. The show's later iteration, *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*, was probably the most significant factor in making color television a fixture in suburban living rooms and helped assuage the peculiar melancholy of the school year's Sunday nights. Within eleven years of Disneyland's opening, in 1955, the theme park's apparently intoxicating blend of nostalgia and futurism, of order, artificiality, and spotlessness, had, according to one assessment, lured roughly a quarter of the country's population. In the year of Disney's death, an estimated 240 million people worldwide watched a Disney movie, 100 million saw a Disney television show every week, and 80 million read a Disney book or magazine.

To be a mainstream American in the American Century was to inhabit Walt Disney's world.

But Disney's career and legacy are a good deal more complicated than that. From the frenetic early Mickey cartoons—which inventively borrowed elements of popular music, comedy, vaudeville, and dance—through the finely wrought shorts and features of the golden age of the Disney studio in the 1930s and early '40s, to the increasingly sentimental, banal, and uplifting animated and live-action films of the 1950s and '60s (think *Son of Flubber*), Disney's work evolved radically. Although intellectuals of the 1930s and early '40s lauded Disney more enthusiastically than any other popular entertainer save Chaplin (*The Nation* declared in 1934 that Mickey Mouse was the "supreme artistic achievement of the moving picture"), they soured on him in the postwar years. By the 1950s, the cultural elite castigated his sensibility and creations, even while the silent majority (as it would soon be known) increasingly and defiantly embraced him as its avatar. His career, then, exposes both monumental shifts in popular entertainment and a concomitant social and cultural divide that remains largely unbridged today.

Though social critics have been assessing Disney's significance since the early 1930s, the film writer Richard Schickel's 1968 book, *The Disney Version*, established the terms of interpretation and debate through which nearly all subsequent works about Disney, including this one, have approached their subject.

Gabler—the author of the spiky and authoritative *Winchell*, among other books—has written an exceptionally intelligent, carefully researched, and absorbing doorstop (it's more than 800 pages). Although reviewers will call it "definitive," it tells a story that for the most part Schickel and Steven Watts—in his outstanding and, alas, largely overlooked *Magic Kingdom*, which places Disney in the richest cultural and historical context—have already related. (Schickel's remains the most analytically and aesthetically penetrating portrait, but it's the least detailed and reliable. And while Gabler is wrong to say that Schickel excoriated his subject and "portrayed him as mercenary and mendacious"—Schickel in fact stressed Disney's sincerity and lack of cynicism—the sometimes jarringly intemperate *Disney Version* was clearly written by an iconoclastic young man in the late 1960s, although one with a remarkably nuanced critical mind.)

As did Schickel and Watts, Gabler stresses Disney's early commitment to innovation—he consistently eschewed his successful formulas in favor of what he called "another street to work on"—and to perfection. A merciless but inspiring boss, Disney demanded that his animators lavish extravagant and hugely expensive care on their work. With every cel and every gag subject to endless, systematized analysis (Disney is indisputably one of the premier story editors in motion-picture history), the Disney studio of the 1930s resembled both a rationalized factory and a medieval guild.

BOOKS OF THE YEAR

Selected by The Atlantic's literary editor, Benjamin Schwarz

TWILIGHT OF THE SUPERHEROES: Stories,
by Deborah Eisenberg (FSG)

THE SECRET RIVER, by Kate Grenville (Grove/Atlantic)

ALL AUNT HAGAR'S CHILDREN: Stories,
by Edward P. Jones (Amistad)

AFTER THIS: A Novel, by Alice McDermott (FSG)

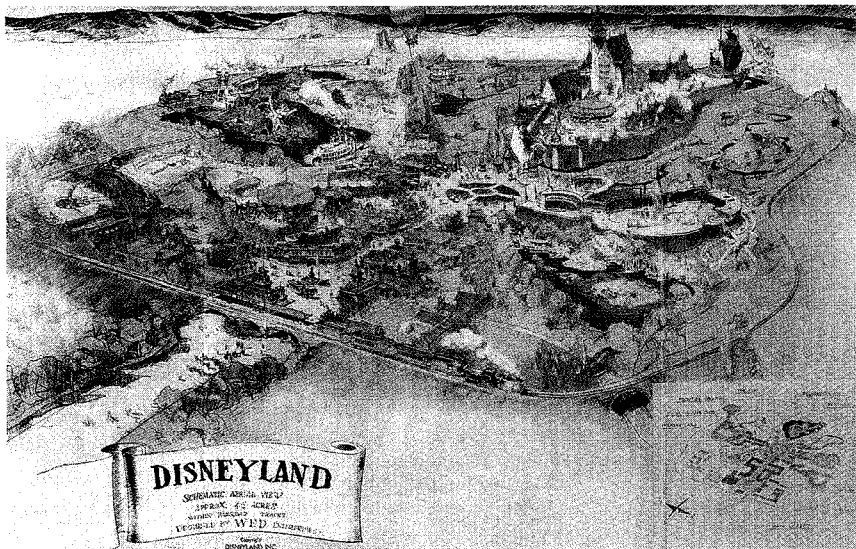
THE ACCIDENTAL: A Novel, by Ali Smith (Pantheon)

FRAMING THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800, by Chris Wickham (Oxford)

For summaries of all books The Atlantic has reviewed in 2006, please see www.theatlantic.com/books2006.



MICHAEL WITTE



An early "imagineering" of the Magic Kingdom

It was a formula for superb animation (the incremental, perfectionist approach probably reached its apogee with 1937's *Snow White*, a movie four years in the making that the great film critic Otis Ferguson hailed at the time as "among the genuine artistic achievements of this country")—and for bankruptcy: despite his immense popular success, Disney never could find a way to make this glacial and inherently risky approach seem like a sound investment to the bankers on whom he was ultimately dependent. (In this way, Disney's experience epitomized the inevitably crazy-making aspect of putting out movies, a colossally complex endeavor that perforce unhappily marries art and commerce.) The golden age was over very soon after it was consolidated: producing propaganda films for the government kept the studio afloat during World War II, and by war's end, given the stringent demands of his creditors, Disney had realized that his movies, as Gabler nicely puts it, "would never be as good as the films he had made before the war—never as beautifully animated, never as deliberately plotted, never as painstakingly fussed over, never as fully the product of a near-religious commitment to greatness."

Of course, the end of the golden age of Disney animation marked the start of both the studio's precipitous artistic decline and its astonishing economic success—a success that ultimately freed it from the constraints imposed by the outside money boys. But if Disney shunned

his gifts, he nevertheless pursued his vision. The string of efficiently made, schmaltzy, gimmicky, or quaintly earnest nature films, live-action movies, dumbed-down and hokey "classics," and TV shows that Disney produced in the 1950s and '60s genuinely and profoundly embodied his interests and sensibilities—as did the occasionally great achievement, such as *Mary Poppins*. Like the preternaturally cheerful Disneyland, with its nostalgic "Main Street, USA," they represented to him, and to his huge and devoted audience, the safe, the bland, and—to a large extent—the mindlessly comforting (in a mock condemnation of *Mary Poppins*, an editorial in *The Kansas City Star* denounced the movie for spurning sardonic satire and the other emblems of "cinema that is Really Worthwhile").

For decades the sophisticated and the well educated somewhat understandably sneered at this passionless and anodyne withdrawal. But that Walt Disney—a man who never learned to catch a ball because as a boy he never had time to play, and a man who adored the soda-fountain confections he hadn't been able to afford as a child—beat such a retreat wasn't really surprising, and was far more sad than contemptible. That his later audience also preferred what they saw as wholesome comforts over daring and clever cinema—or even authentic experience—should perhaps also arouse more sympathy, or at least scrutiny, than disdain. ▀

Benjamin Schwarz is The Atlantic's literary editor and national editor.

LOREENA MCKENNITT AN ANCIENT MUSE



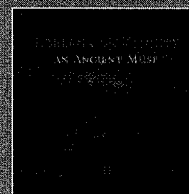
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BOOKS

Of Sex and Marriage

Stop it, you're killing my libido

BY CRISTINA NEHRING

Everything good is bad for you. That, in so many words, is the theme of Esther Perel's little red book on how to achieve sexual bliss in marriage. And the bad news—or the good, depending on your priorities—is that it's probably true.

Communication? Forget it. Destroys the libido.

Equality? A turnoff.

Monogamy? Puts a girl to sleep.

Kids you cherish? A death sentence.

One might reasonably make the argument that if good sex comes at so high a price, *who wants it?* Or at least, who can afford it? If it comes at the price of intimacy, honesty, security, harmony, openness, and trust, shouldn't we just *pass*? Of course, Esther Perel would claim that I'm distorting her argument. She is, after all, to judge from *Mating in Captivity*, an extremely

upbeat person and backs off constantly from the disturbing nature of her contentions. Where Denis de Rougemont, the author of the mid-twentieth-century classic *Love in the Western World*, might say, "Passion is a death drive: stay away from it!" Perel says, "Passion demands you discard all that's dear to you—so *what are you waiting for?*" And she smiles.

Even though she was born in Belgium and schooled in Israel, and speaks eight languages, she is fundamentally, deeply American—indeed, announcing that you speak eight languages is a deeply American thing to do. (As I write, I am living in Crete, where half the people who wash floors in hotels speak eight languages and *don't* tell you.) Perel is American in both the best sense and the worst in which Europe-

MATING IN
CAPTIVITY
Reconciling the
Erotic and the
Domestic
by Esther Perel
HarperCollins

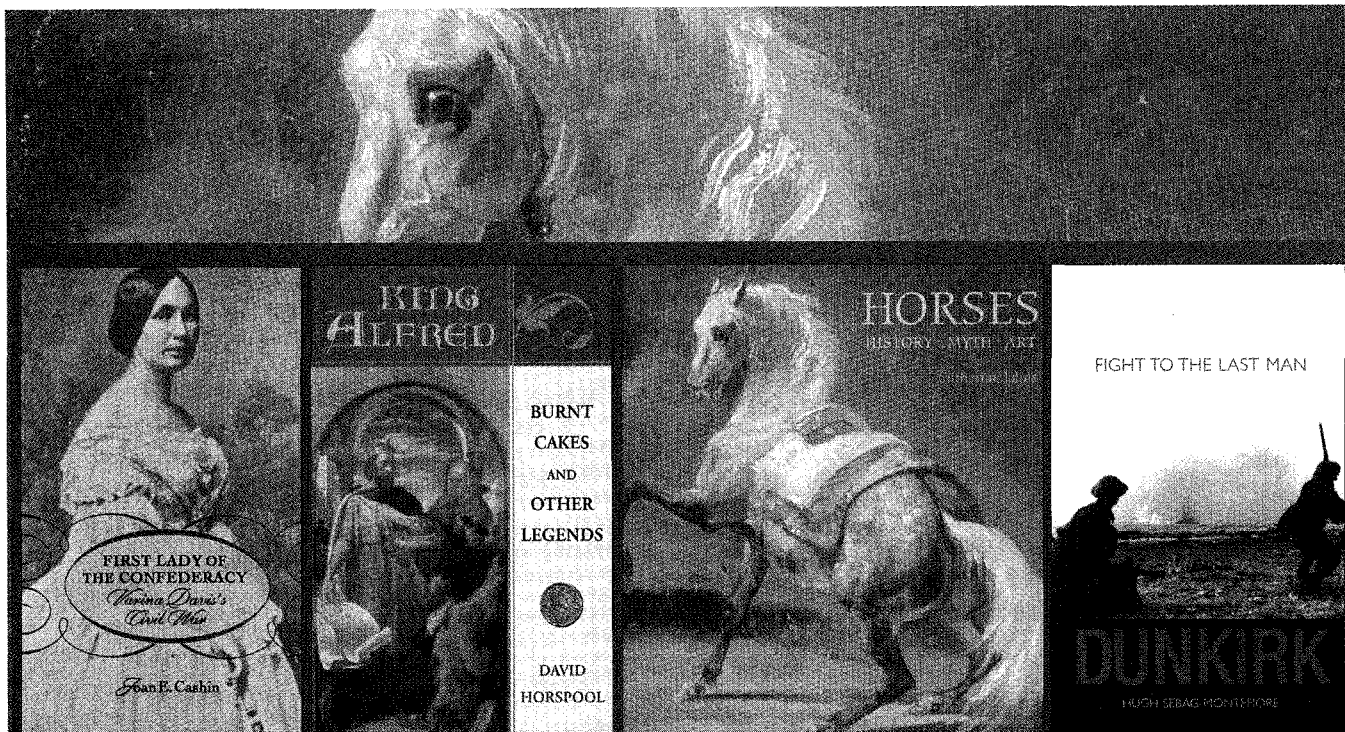
ans use the term: She is American in her can-do conviction that people will live happily ever after. She is American also in her self-promotion ("My husband is the director of the International Trauma Studies Program at Columbia University ... My parents were survivors of Nazi concentration camps," she tells us, as though this bore on her thesis). She is American, finally, in her unquestioning assumption that we should *work like hell* on our sex lives.

Perel practices couples therapy in New York, and her book's organizing principle emerges in a series of clinical vignettes. A typical one might go like this: One spunky young couple has it all. They adore each other. They have wonderful times, wonderful families, spectacular careers. But they are "*in despair over what's happening to them*." "We are terrified," they confess. Why? Because their sex together is good, dear reader, but it is not *great*.

Incalculable woe. Part of us wonders if Perel might best advise such couples to *get a life*—i.e., *care about something more important*. Go help the homeless or the victims of war, and let your libido rebound on its own time. But the advice Perel proffers her "distressed" clients is not to help others; it is to destroy themselves. Do you, she asks them, express physical affection? "Do you cuddle? ... Do you touch each other?" Yes, they say, in unison. Well, announces the doctor, "*it's got to stop*." She gives them an assignment: Stop being nice to each other. Stop kissing. Stop hugging. It is sapping your sexual energy. Treat each other like trash, and you might notice a discreet rise in sexual tension. Or just tension in general, one is tempted to add: "About a month into it," he says, "I wanted nothing more to do with her." Dr. Perel considers this plan a success. "I knew I was onto something," she intones.

It's easy to make fun of this sort of thing—and it's important to do so. For the suggestions Perel offers are repellent, as are the assumptions that underlie them: that sex is our only *raison d'être*, and that it's great to forfeit emotional contact for an extra erotic tickle. That said, Perel *is* onto something. The ironies of intimacy she discusses in her

JOHN CUNEO



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JOAN E. CASHIN

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—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

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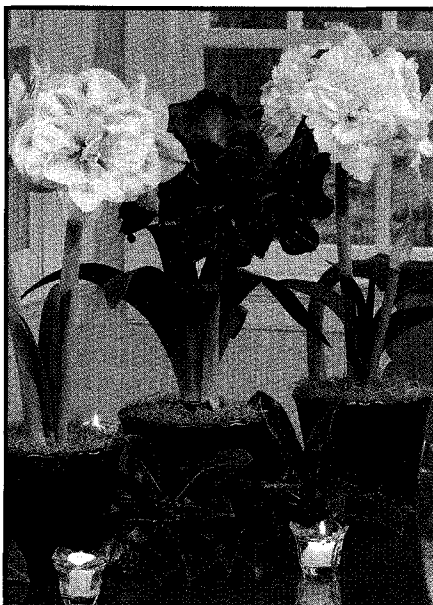
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book are real. The paradoxes to which she points—that the cozy closeness of marriage does not often promote unruly desire; that children, the fruit of eros, are sometimes simultaneously its end; and that knowing everything about a person domestically or psychologically does not always make one crave that person biblically—are real. And they are worth talking about.

Sexuality is all about bridging distances—but to bridge distances, you must *have* distances. And for all our sentimental talk of seeking an “other half” (perhaps the only expression to loom as large in Plato’s *Symposium* as it does in the cursives of Hallmark), most of us do *not*, in fact, seek “a part of ourselves.” We do not long for our left leg. We do not desire our brother, nor usually even our best friend. Erotic love—for all of its attraction to what it recognizes and identifies with—is drawn at least as strongly to what it does *not* recognize. In truth, it is drawn toward the distant and dangerous more than it is to the sweet, the solicitous, the familiar.

Is this as bankrupt a state as it appears? A reflection of our inability to love long or well; to appreciate what we have come to know? Or might it be construed not as the *frailty* of eros but, rather, its *generosity*, its largesse, its ambition and strength, that it burns more brightly for a stranger than a sibling, a foreigner than a friend—that it yearns not for its mirror image but rather for an Authentic Other: the man outside the gate, the woman untamed, the interloper?

We must be two before we can be one, said Ralph Waldo Emerson. To merge most passionately, we must first be defiantly distinct. The question becomes how to maintain such distinctness in a long-term relationship. “Make space enough between you,” Shakespeare’s soothsayer says to Antony and Caesar—and we might say to lovers. Many of the most ardent couples have, like Pyramus and Thisbe, retained a barrier between them—whether that barrier was a city block, as with Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, or a garden and a monkey pen, as with Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

The one thing these couples did *not* put between them—and *shouldn’t*,

according to Esther Perel—is a spoiled child. “Overzealous parenting,” she declares, is a

recent trend that has, one hopes, reached the apex of its folly ... Childhood has been sanctified so that it no longer seems ridiculous for one adult to sacrifice herself entirely in order to foster the flawless and painless development of her offspring.

Bad as this is for children (who emerge with a sense of entitlement that unfits them for social life), it is worse for parents. The mother who spends all day arranging playdates for her toddler is the mother who has no time for her own dates. She is the woman who no longer knows what her husband looks like without a child in a satchel on his back and a second in a sling across his chest (“Kinder-trees,” Milan Kundera has called such unfortunates). He is the father who dresses his child in Armani and himself in sweatsuits. They are the men and women who have been desexualized, deindividualized, dehumanized. Tools of their offspring, they have ceased to live for themselves—and if eroticism needs one thing, it needs a sense of self. It needs a sense of greed and want, aggression and emotion, desire and agency. Tools don’t make love. People make love.

On this matter, as on others, Perel is brave and right. She is adept at pinpointing problems; less so at proposing solutions. Her recommendations for retaining the distance in which passion can flare are at once gimmicky and tragic. We do better to seek pointers in *Love in the Western World*. “If it is true that passion seeks the Inaccessible,” says de Rougemont, “... is not every *Other* the Inaccessible?”

Too quickly we assume we understand the persons we love, and put them into categories. Because we know how they take their coffee or turn over in bed, we think we know their emotional or moral turbulences, their secret judgments, recurrent temptations. It is revelatory—because re-estranging—to encounter our closest companions in contexts unlike those in which we usually confer. The novelist Siri Hustvedt writes of the thrall that overcomes her when she sees her husband, Paul Auster, at a public ceremony. Many a tired

husband is shocked when he suddenly sees his wife dance—or flirt, or fight, or take command, or write a poem.

We all, as Walt Whitman said, contain multitudes. It is salutary to remember this, salutary to encourage this, salutary—even—to know this *is* encouraged, so that we remain unafraid to surprise. (Those who love us best are often the worst enemies of our self-reinvention—and thus the enemies, ironically, of their own serendipitous delight.) This is an oblique strategy indeed, compared with Perel's. But in its obliqueness lies an advantage. For in love we miss the things we aim at directly. To strike a target, Love's archer must aim to the side. When sex becomes the subject of self-improvement, when couples monitor the frequency and intensity—the regularity and reciprocity—of their erotic contact, it becomes as dull a drudgery as their day job, as boring a routine as biceps curls.

I am no judge of Perel's practice, but I am a judge of our sexual culture, and it seems to me that we are talking ourselves to death. We are talking our desire to death. Rather than make stilted little shows of transgression (Perel enjoins us, among other things, to act "ruthless" in bed, and to imagine adulteries if we don't commit them), perhaps we could regain some of sexuality's transgressive energy by *remystifying* our eroticism rather than by *demystifying* it, by *reveiling* our desire rather than by rehearsing it ad nauseam, by rediscovering the power of wit and suggestion, sublimation and caesura. Nobody rushes to see what is spread out on the sunny asphalt like a dried fish or a flogged octopus. What the crowds on the Cretan waterfront I presently call home clamor to see is not the fat fish in the display case but the flash of fin in the foam, the glint of gold in the waves, the fleeting copper that the ocean swallows again as quickly as it reveals.

It is not by flaying our erotic impulses into banality and duty that we fortify them. It is sometimes by averting our eyes that we see most clearly, and feel most strongly. The 1960s freed us to look squarely at sex. Our own decade might free us to look at something else besides—to look not more, but deeper. ▀

Cristina Nehring, a regular Atlantic contributor, is writing a book for HarperCollins about women and love.

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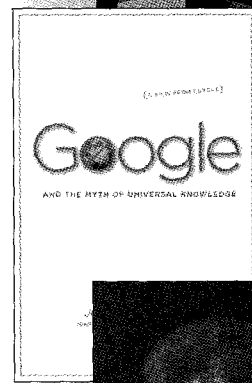
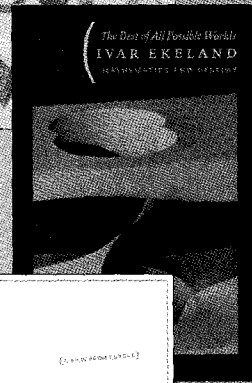
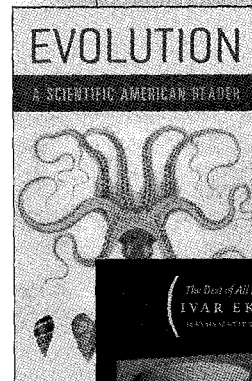
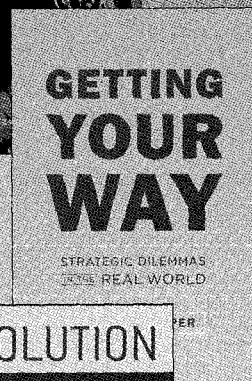
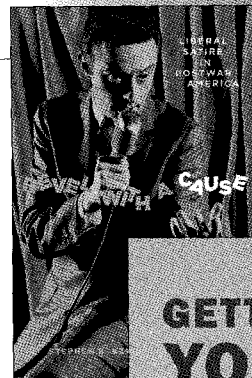
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BOOKS

True North

A career-spanning anthology reveals again why Alice Munro is the living writer most likely to be read in a hundred years

BY MONA SIMPSON

This past June, for the launch of a PEN Canada anthology of essays by fifty authors, Alice Munro wrote that she could quit writing “in the interests of a manageable life.” When she read those words aloud at the corresponding benefit, however, she appended, “When I wrote that, I believed it”—meaning, of course, that she wasn’t quitting at all, that she couldn’t stay away. But the gentle joke seems to have passed over the press corps’s head, because throughout Canada, where Munro is a deity on the order of Japan’s Living National Treasures, newspapers announced that the seventy-five-year-old writer was putting down her pen.

Born in Wingham, Ontario, to a fox-farming father (who eventually wrote a novel about his Scottish ancestors) and a schoolteacher mother (who died of a debilitating and disfiguring disease when Munro was in her twenties), she went on to win a scholarship to college, which she attended for two years, until the

money ran out. Afterward, she married Jim Munro and moved with him to Vancouver, where they opened a bookstore together and had three daughters. Eventually, though, Munro left Vancouver, left the marriage, and returned to Ontario. She now lives some twenty miles from

her birthplace, with her second husband, in the house where he grew up.

She’s been writing stories for more than fifty years, the way anyone would like to: steadily (a handful or so a year, adding up to a new book every three or four) and superbly well. Her work is

education and the city—an outsider. And now this industrious trimmer, embroiderer, and canny liar has shaped and recorded (“not in an austere or rigorously factual way”) the histories of some people—in fact, her family—most of whom were neither sufficiently illustrious nor sufficiently egregious that their stories would otherwise be preserved. And in the course of the telling, Munro’s own history emerges.

“These are stories,” she stresses. “You could say that such stories pay more attention to the truth of a life than fiction usually does. But not enough to swear on.”

This amalgam of history, fiction, and memoir is unlike any historical fiction or autobiographical fiction that I have ever encountered. It is more on the order of a flowing exploration, which begins in obscurity, brings vividly into the light

assorted pioneers and settlers of the author’s family, and then weaves itself into various circumstances of Munro’s own life, probing possibilities and happening upon continuities.

The book looks simultaneously back and forward, even beyond the confines of its own end, seeking to divine the place and internal experience of certain individuals, including the author herself, within history and passing time. To read this book is to experience oneself speculatively, too—to sense acutely the properties and capacities of a mortal existence as the future streams toward us.



THE VIEW FROM CASTLE ROCK

by Alice Munro
Knopf

NEW FICTION

BY DEBORAH EISENBERG

With *The View From Castle Rock*, Alice Munro exercises what is apparently something of an inherited disposition: the desire, or compulsion, to record. She says of a distant forebear, the writer James Hogg, that he “was both insider and outsider, industriously and—he hoped—profitably shaping and recording his people’s stories ... There would be some trimming and embroidering of material ... Some canny lying of the sort you can depend upon a writer to do.”

Munro, too, has had the uncomfortable advantage of being both an insider and—after leaving the centuries-long rural life of her ancestors for a university

remarkable for its evenness of quality—it's hard to remember a weak story. Of course, it's this very consistency that makes discussion of Munro's work increasingly difficult. "Bravo again!" one wants to shout, almost helplessly, after reading each new collection. This may also explain why critical analysis of her last few books has turned more and more into argumentation about fame, and about why Munro is or is not considered on the same level as ... fill in the blank. Margaret Atwood declares, in her introduction to *Carried Away*, the recently released Everyman's Library collection of Munro stories, "She's the kind of writer about whom it is often said—no matter how well-known she becomes—that she ought to be better known."

Why *isn't* she? The short story, Munro's preferred form, has been blamed. With the exception of one early novel (*Lives of Girls and Women*), she's written only short stories—in an age that doesn't particularly value them. (This magazine has stopped publishing fiction in its regular issues; *The New Yorker* publishes fewer short stories than it did twenty years ago; and no one would ever suggest today that fiction helps *sell* any magazine, as stories did when Fitzgerald and Faulkner churned them out to support their longer projects.) Being a most unexotic Canadian probably hasn't helped, either.

Readers will find the familiar joys of Munro's writing—the breathtaking accuracy of observation; the apparently casual narrative that turns out to have led inexorably to some inescapable juncture; the disarming directness of expression; the author's ability to captivate us immediately and draw us gradually into strange, intense, lingering states of mind; the flashes of deadpan satire; the penetrating social vision; the inimitable blend of cool scrutiny and profound empathy. But *The View From Castle Rock* is not only every bit as beautiful and substantial a work as Munro's readers might hope for; it is also a work of dizzying originality. In fact, it creates an entirely new category of book into which only it can fall.

Deborah Eisenberg is the author of several story collections, the latest of which is *Twilight of the Superheroes*.

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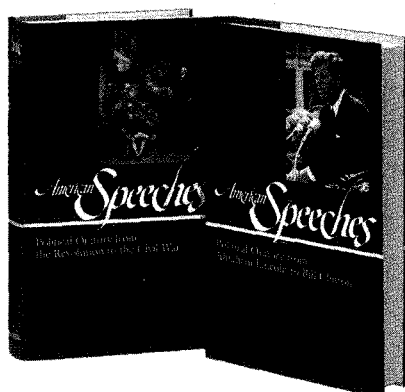
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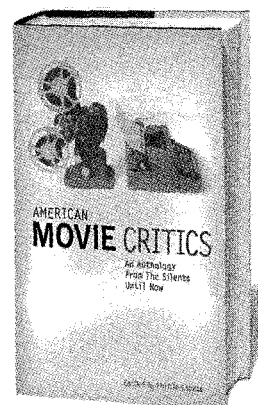
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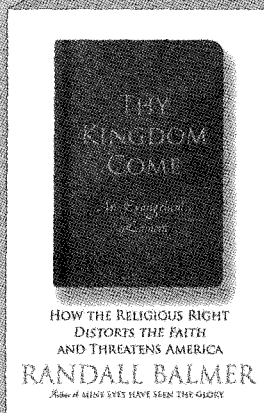


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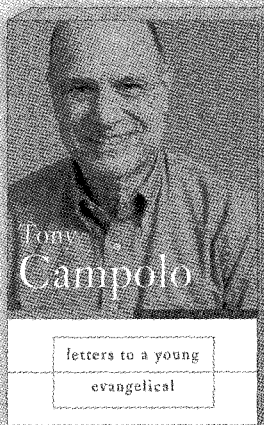
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BASIC BOOKS

But it also may be because—as in all naturalistic fiction that cuts deepest, from Chekhov forward—there's almost no showing off in the stories themselves, which are told in a voice that improbably captures the oomph of regional vernacular while also spreading a calm sense of authority. Underneath, one feels the push and verve of a woman born in 1931 struggling against the manners of her culture. (The prevailing ethos of Munro's hometown in Ontario was embodied in the Canadian title of her fourth book, *Who Do You Think You Are?*—published elsewhere as *The Beggar Maid*.) The absence of tricks and linguistic bragging makes the reader feel equal to the work—sometimes to the point of forgetting that there is an author at all.

at all) physically attractive. In Munro's stories, these women—with something "off," a missing feather or some unlearned dance—become mythic.

This fall, Knopf is publishing two volumes of Munro's work, and her fans (and this reviewer is one) will again hope ... for what exactly? A larger readership for their writer? More prizes? *Respect*? Immortality, I suppose—but that isn't quite presaged by the enthusiasm of reviews upon publication, or by sales figures, or by how often the books pop up on college reading lists, or by any other measure.

As previously mentioned, the Everyman's Library, which canonizes and beautifully cloth-binds great books, from the Old Testament to *A House for Mr.*

It's Munro's very consistency that makes discussion of her work increasingly difficult. "Bravo again!" one wants to shout, almost helplessly, after reading each new collection.

If Munro is strikingly unsweet in her characterization of female sexuality, she isn't precisely subversive, but neither is she romantic. She palpably evokes the imperatives of erotic love, but her characters' ardent pursuits and passionate abandons don't tend to end well. The successful marriages in Munro seem to be based on other qualities—reading together, for example, in "What Is Remembered." Or mutual needs, in "Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage" (Munro's answer to *Washington Square*), in which the romantic hero feels lifted by the sight of his potential bride's bankbook, and the reader nonetheless roots for the couple. This overall vision, accurate though it may be, is not destined to satisfy a vast reading population that is bent on the happy ending (or at least on the bittersweet). Her portraits of women's fierce and complicated feelings about their children may also disturb readers. Just as perturbing, perhaps, is another kind of woman in the Munro canon. She appears in different incarnations, but she's preternaturally strong and not conventionally (or not

Biswas, has—at last, one feels—published a collection of Munro stories, seventeen in all, which the author herself selected. (This is an enormous honor for Munro, though one hopes Everyman's will publish successive volumes, adding up to a complete set in the manner of the Ecco Press Chekhov, a writer to whom Munro has often been compared.) This book opens with "Royal Beatings," perhaps Munro's most famous story, and also the first of hers published in *The New Yorker*, in 1977. (Through the reigns of three pronouncedly different fiction editors, *The New Yorker* has published Munro's fiction ever since.) Munro picked two stories apiece from *The Beggar Maid* and each book that followed, with certain exceptions, including *Friend of My Youth*, from which three stories appear, and *Open Secrets*—considered among aficionados her very best collection—from which come four. I wish the collection also included "My Mother's Dream," from *The Love of a Good Woman*, "What Is Remembered," from *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*, and "Dance of the Happy Shades," from

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In this powerful book, Phares puts the history, evolution and future plans of the international jihadi movement in perspective, allowing for a better understanding of the terrorist strategies against the U.S. and the West, before and since 9/11.

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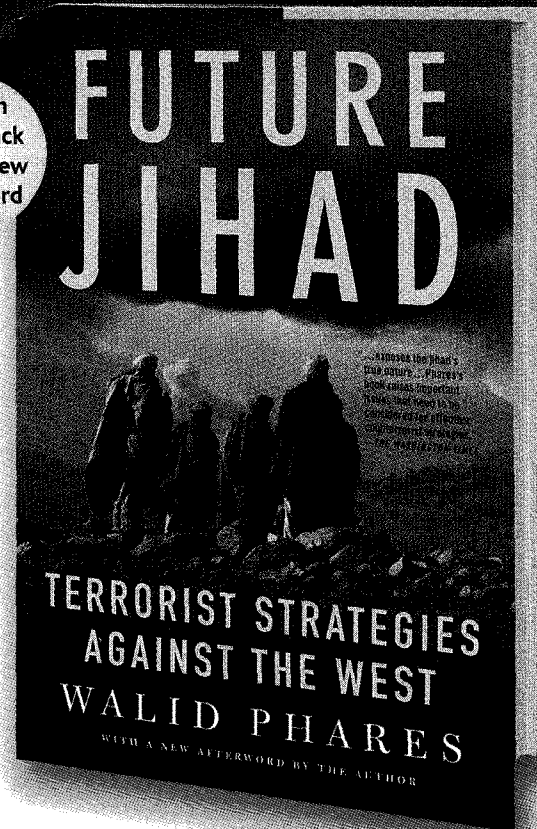
"Why 9/11?" Phares explains how some "hot headed" Jihadists, including al Qaeda, wanted to strike America, while the more realist ones, backed by oil lobbies, preferred a long term strategy of penetration and mollification of Western democracies. This gradual jihadi infiltration of the West since the 1970s targeted academia, media, Government and ultimately Defense and security systems. The main goal of these strategies was to blur the national perception of the jihadi threat and take the control of American and European foreign policies.

Phares' book has drawn the attention of policy makers, legislators, educators, judges, security planners, academics, journalists and broadcasters, as well of thousands of readers in the US and around the world.

Walid Phares, a university professor and a senior fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, appears on MSNBC, Fox News, CNN, BBC, C-Span, CBC, al Jazeera, al Hurra, and many other networks worldwide. *Future Jihad* has been cited by main publications, web sites, including Oprah, as one of the best "teachers on Terrorism." Phares provides expertise to the US Congress, Homeland Security, European Parliament, and the United Nations.

Born in Beirut and educated on three continents, Phares has more than 25 years of study and research of the jihadi movement. "He understands the mind of the Jihadists like no one else" says Col Jack Jacobs, NBC Terrorism analyst. "He sees how the Terrorists play our system better than anyone else," says Col Bill Cowen of Fox News. *Future Jihad* is now a requested reader on many syllabis around the nation's campuses in international relations, security and terrorism studies, as well as Middle East politics.

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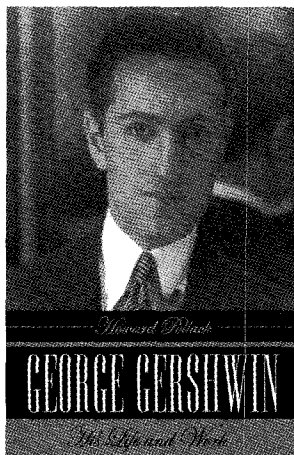
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the collection of the same name. But it does contain her greatest hits, many of her most powerful and ambitious stories, and it should ensure a larger audience for her work. It also offers, in the course of things, stories from many stages of women's lives, the vantages ranging from girlhood to old age.

What *should* make Munro hugely popular (if there were any logic to these things) is the rare combination of her emotional depth and her engagement with the strange arrangements of contemporary life. One of the simple thrills offered by Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* is the notion of an unhappy Angeleno housewife reading *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1949—reading the great book not as such, but as a book, published recently, by an author who has such and such a history. This is the essential bargain of literature: we know that if it's good enough, it will be timeless; nonetheless, we come to it hoping to learn something about how to live our own life, now. We come to Alice Munro's stories as Laura Brown (Cunningham's housewife) came to Virginia Woolf's novel.

Sheila Munro—in her respectful, spunky, and modest memoir about growing up with Alice Munro—reminds us that years before her mother was asked whether her daughters found it embarrassing that she articulated a woman's carnality, Virginia Woolf herself acknowledged that she was powerless to represent a woman's corporeal experience, as were women writers before her. Most readers—not only Munro's daughters—would agree that Munro did just that.

During her middle age, Munro wrote convincingly about the power and havoc of erotic desire, and now she's written about becoming old. In the last story of the Everyman's collection, "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," we meet a professor who, though he loves his childless wife, nevertheless succumbed—repeatedly—to the usual temptations offered middle-aged scholars at liberal-arts colleges during the '70s and '80s. Later, his wife, with whom he's stayed, contracts Alzheimer's and has to be put in a home. Once there, she forms an attachment that looks to him, in every way, like love. When the object of her affection leaves the facility (his wife

takes him out), she suffers a depression. The old philanderer, then, in an act of love, sets out to seduce that man's wife, in order to persuade her to return her husband to the home. In Canada, apparently, filmmakers have produced a screen adaptation of the story. Perhaps this, finally, will push Munro into the popular consciousness.

The View From Castle Rock, Munro's new collection, makes it quite clear that if Margaret Atwood and handfuls of reviewers are fretting over her popularity, Munro herself is not. In fact, she is again breaking new ground. Though the book jacket calls the work "stories," many of the tales feel guided by the principles of memoir. The difference between fiction and memoir is not merely a matter of sources and how much of the material "really happened." It has to do with the honor the author ascribes to what really happened, and whether that seems to hold a greater density of truth than some alloyed version. In many of Munro's previous great stories, there are parallels to be found with her life in the roughest outlines, yet there is no question that those tales are fiction, despite the reader's being able to pick out "the Munro character" or "the fox-farmer father" or "the woman leaving her husband." These latest tales, while perhaps not as personal as some of her previous stories, feel more like memoirs, in that they obey the stark laws of that form. Gorgeous, completely nuanced scenes become revealed, and then, abruptly, the narrator will pull back and tell us that that is all she knows (see Deborah Eisenberg's review, elsewhere in this section).

The new collection does not have the feel of the *Last Testament of Alice*. It seems a personal gift, made of bits of family history, and perhaps written as much for her children and grandchildren as for posterity. On the matter of Munro, at seventy-five, breaking her wand: when I asked her American editor, Ann Close, recently whether the newspaper reports were true, that Munro was indeed quitting, she answered, "We already have four stories toward a new collection." ■

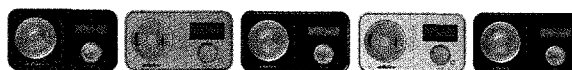
Mona Simpson is the author of four novels, including *Anywhere But Here* *and* *Off Keck Road*.

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Out of Character

On Richard Ford's latest

BY JOSEPH O'NEILL

"No tricks," Raymond Carver crisply enjoined the prospective writer. "At the first sign of a trick or gimmick in a piece of fiction . . . I tend to look for cover." Carver was, as everybody knows, a mentor, friend, and admirer of Richard Ford; yet one can't help wondering whether Ford's verbally awesome but, I fear, fundamentally specious new novel would have had the maestro ducking behind a parapet.

The Lay of the Land is the third Frank Bascombe narration—Frank being the dreamy, sadly self-monitoring sportswriter of *The Sportswriter*; and thereafter the less dreamy but still sadly self-monitoring real-estate broker of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Independence Day*, a man at such a quidditative loss as to prompt his ex-wife to remark, "Everything's in quotes with you, Frank. Nothing's really solid." Book three finds Frank the fifty-five-year-old owner of a Jersey Shore realty business, and grumpier. His second wife, Sally (last seen as his girlfriend), has left him for another man; his prostate contains a slow-growing tumor; the Florida election debacle is going Bush's way (it's November 2000, and Frank voted Gore); plus he faces a daunting Thanksgiving family influx. It's a familiar setup—the first two books centered respectively on Easter and the Fourth of July holiday—and it leaves Frank well placed to ruminate, again, on his most basic conundrum: how to locate an "inner essence" that will enable him to pass off his life (to himself no less than to others) as one of merit and substance.

A ruminative novel necessarily depends on the companionability of the ruminator: we read on because we're enthralled by the company of, say, Binx Bolling, the moviegoer of Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* (a novel that's a huge artistic creditor of Ford's trilogy), and we happily refrain from pressing the more pragmatic demands we might make of other fiction. Likewise, in the earlier Bascombe installments, we're swept up by the hero's dappled, marvelously involving

murmurings, in which chronic gloom and alienation are spotted with fleeting rays of real feeling. Those books, however, are anchored by very real familial misfortunes (the death of a child, the disintegration of a marriage, the troubles of an anguished fifteen-year-old son) that Frank, anomie notwithstanding, cannot help but humanly experience and communicate. *The Lay of the Land*, it transpires, has no comparable anchor—and this is where the trouble starts. Because once the spell of voice breaks, so too the reader's horribly conditional forbearance.

Thus it struck me, about a third of the way through, that Frank Bascombe repeatedly says, does, and thinks stuff that nobody would, not even Frank Bascombe. I ended up—like Kingsley Amis reading Virginia Woolf—muttering to myself, No he didn't; no, that isn't what he thought; no, that's just what she *didn't* say. Take the following dialogue between Frank and his daughter (nonspeech excised):

Clarissa: "Einstein said a man doesn't feel his own weight in free fall. Does that go for women, do you think?"

Frank: "Einstein wasn't that smart. He sounds serious but isn't. You're not in free fall anyway."

Clarissa: "I don't like dual ways of thinking. I know *you* don't."

Frank: "And and but always seem the same to me. I like it."

Clarissa: "As much as you think your life is just another life, it is, I guess."

In isolation, an implausibly pretentious exchange wouldn't matter much. But there are many conversations like this, and, moreover, they are not drowned into insignificance by an overpowering narrative current. For all of its brilliance—Ford's sentence-by-sentence resourcefulness is astonishing—*The Lay of the Land* never pivots, as its predecessors did, on an engaging drama. The kids wash in and out of the story, as do a number of well-observed characters, which would be fine if something else gripped us—say, Frank's dealings with his estranged wife, Sally. But since he is "no longer so blue about [her] absence," and since Sally never takes shape as a creature of real longings, we don't care very much either.

Which leaves us alone with Frank and his stream of observations. His physical descriptions are bright, unflagging, and very often hilarious, whether they concern the wrinkling longitude lines of an imploding tower, or runners gathering on a suburban street for a "Turkey Day 5-K." But the effect of such dead-on accounts is frustrated by perhaps the most serious obstacle placed in the reader's way: the many recherché, untrue-ringing, and otherwise suspect insights to which Frank lays claim. Thus the aforementioned runners provoke the dispirited comment,

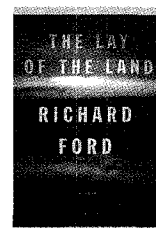
"It gives me the grims to think of what we humans do that no one's life depends on, and always drives me right out the door into the street with . . . my head spinning." Which in turn provokes the response, No it doesn't, and no it doesn't.

And it's in this way that one eventually comes to question the very basics of Frank Bascombe: how it could be (in a

novel steeped in psychological actuality) that a chronically rarefied, left-leaning, discriminating person such as he might *in all seriousness and for decades and without self-acknowledged anguish or self-medication* elect the dumbed-down gratifications offered by a realty job, corny leisure activities, and a circle of dimwitted and/or Republican friends and neighbors who don't bat an eye whenever he comes out with one of his gnomic pronouncements.

One answer to all this is, of course, that Frank Bascombe isn't *supposed* to add up. He's supposed to be a dunderheaded bullshitter, a fraudulent Everyman, a failed novelist who's sublimated his creativity into a life that's an art performance. "Ann says I fabricate these feelings," he notes in *Independence Day*. "But so what? I still have them." It's a fine, ambitious idea: a literary character seeking "a recognizable and persuasive semblance of a character." It certainly worked in *Independence Day*. But in that novel, the suburbanite guise felt temporary, and was in any event lost in the magic mix. In these so often impressive pages, it doesn't feel right. It feels tricky. ▀

Joseph O'Neill is writing his third novel, *The Brooklyn Dream Game*.



THE LAY OF THE LAND

by Richard Ford
Knopf

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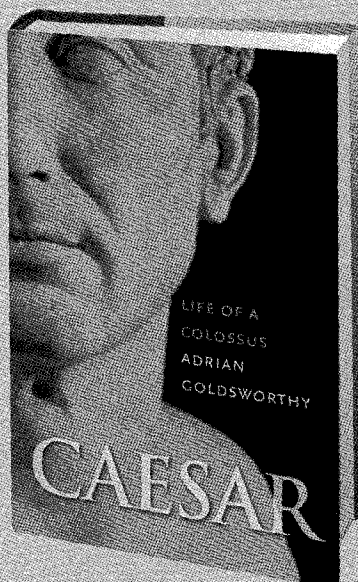
—Publishers Weekly
(starred review)

"Fascinating."

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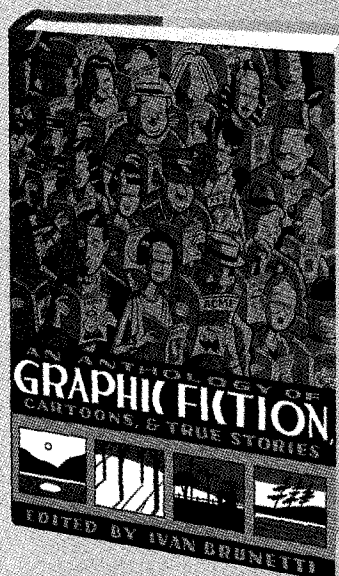
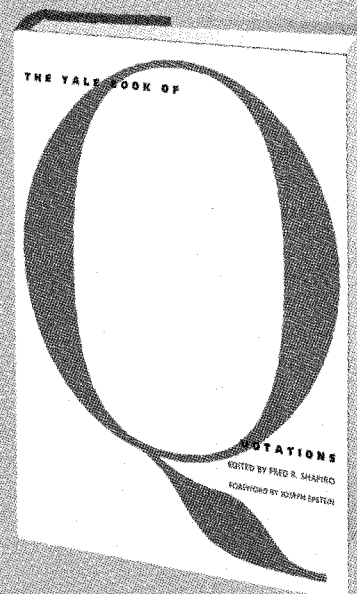
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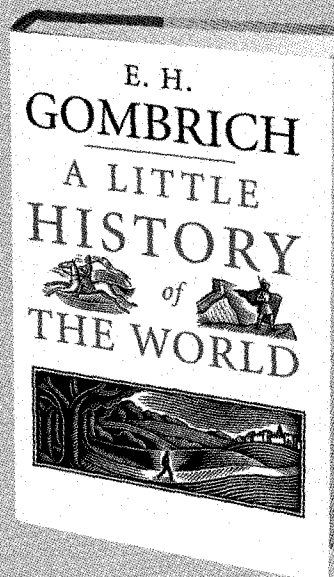
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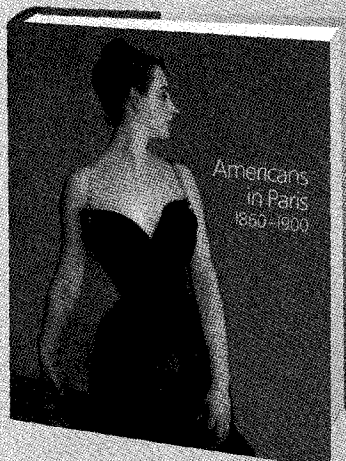
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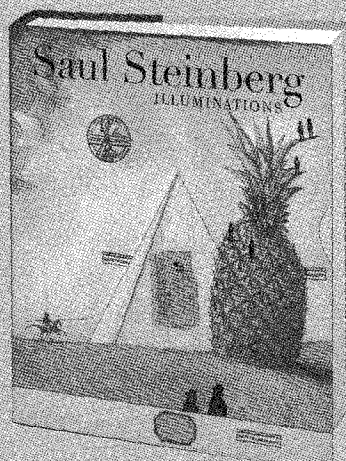
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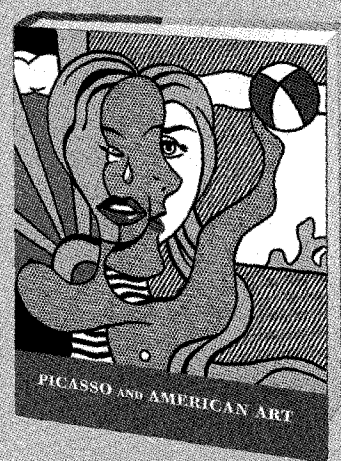
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BOOKS

Rich Man's Burden

The steely resolve of Andrew Carnegie

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

If generalizations about national character and national callings were as unreliable as some people purport to think, then the names MacAdam and MacIntosh would not have entered everyday language (albeit abbreviated as the words *tarmac* and *mac*). Scots like to boast of the number of practical and engineered devices that their sons have given the world (John Logie Baird's first TV set might be another, if less eponymous, example), and it used to be said that if you shouted "Mac!" down the hatch to the engine room on any ship in the British Empire, the chief mechanic would very soon make his appearance on deck. (This tradition survived into the naming of "Scotty," the only man who knew how to keep the Starship *Enterprise* functioning and on course.) And native enterprise, too, is considered by the thrifty Scots to have been the air that was breathed by that great son of St. Andrews, Adam Smith, the modest herald of modern capitalism.

In contrast, or perhaps in counterpart, the other great tradition of Scotland is rebellion and political radicalism, from Robert Burns to James Keir Hardie to the Red Clydeside. An accompaniment to this is a fierce emphasis on, and respect for, education, especially of the self-taught or self-acquired variety. If one takes any or all of these indicators as typical, then Andrew Carnegie of Dunfermline, Fife, would have been the very personification of a Scotsman.

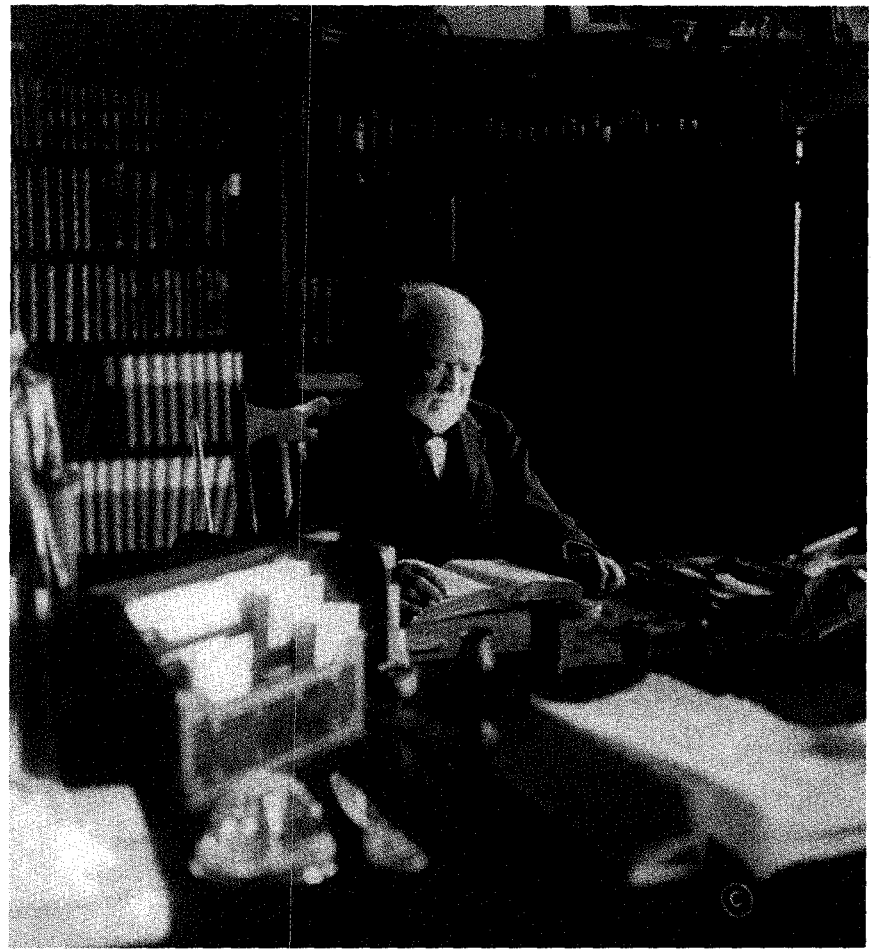
To say that this is not how he has come down to us would be an understatement. For decades, his name was inseparable from the two stock phrases (*robber baron* and *Gilded Age*) that were allowed to define late-nineteenth-century American industrialism. John Dos Passos makes him a no-less stock character in *The 42nd Parallel*, the first volume of the *U.S.A.* trilogy, in which someone has to

embody—as in an E. L. Doctorow cameo—the figure of the incarnate acquisitionist. When I taught at the University of Pittsburgh, in the 1990s, the remains of the old Homestead steel plant were much visited by both locals and tourists, either as a museum of the American Rust Belt or as a shrine to the Gettysburg of the *lutte de classe*. Elsewhere in the city, if a gallery or museum or university was not named for Andrew Carnegie, it was named for one or another of his partners or rivals in the shape of either a Mellon or a Frick. This was widely viewed as the tribute, in the form of conscience money, that had been originally raised from the blood of the toilers. In cities with less radical traditions, Carnegie and his benefactions were regarded with equal simplicity as the living proof of the American dream and the Horatio Alger principle. The great strength of this immense biography is the way in which David Nasaw causes these tributaries—capitalism, radicalism, and educational aspiration—to converge like the three rivers (the Allegheny, the Ohio,

and the Monongahela) whose confluence makes the site of Pittsburgh possible.

Andrew Carnegie was born in 1835, the son of a weaver who was a tenant of the vast estate of Lord Elgin, delapidator of the Parthenon. His early memories were of the Chartist agitation by which, for the first time, the more educated British workers attempted to secure not just economic but political reform, demanding their own voice in Parliament and an end to the tyranny of the hereditary nobles lampooned by Burns in "For A' That." Though the struggle was very advanced for its time and did eventually lead to enfranchisement, it was powerless to halt the decline of the smaller weaving towns. The Carnegies were compelled to do what many had done before them, and board a ship for the United States.

Nasaw reminds us of a time that many people have forgotten: that period of the "Hungry '40s" when the United States was considered by the radicals of Europe to be a lantern of liberty, equality,

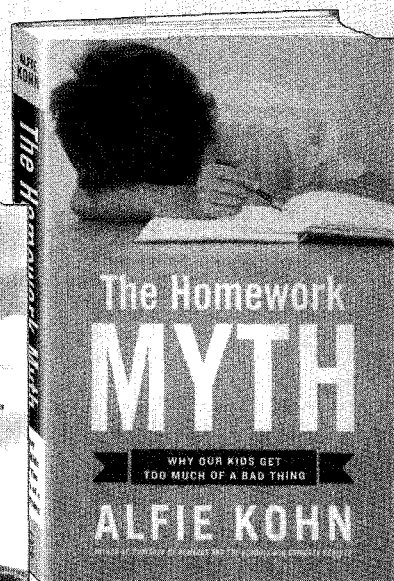
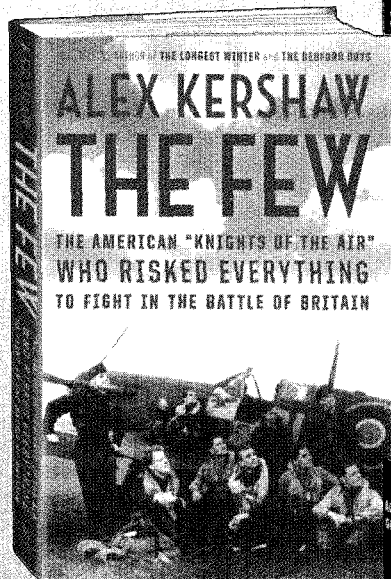


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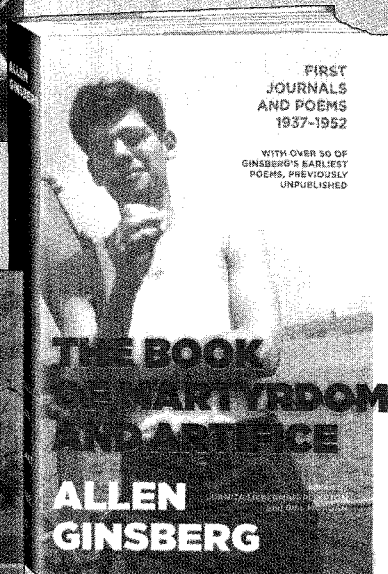
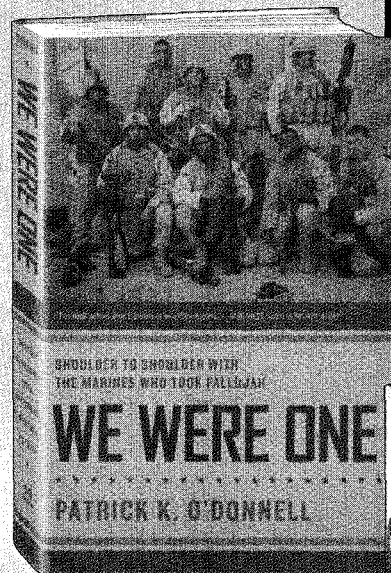
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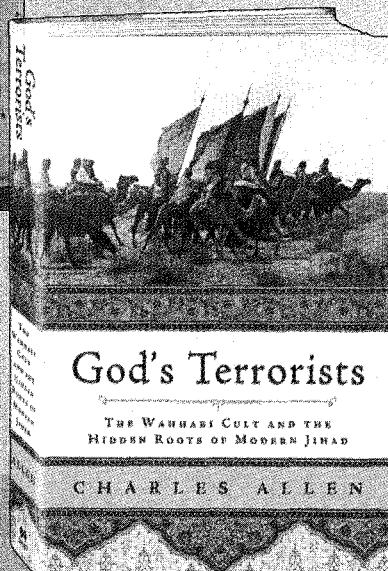
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and fraternity. (It was to try to dispel this very illusion that Charles Dickens wrote his *American Notes* and, later, his dreadful novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*.) Young Andrew was almost as excited by America as Chuzzlewit himself: no kings or aristos, no distinctions of rank, no established church or clerisy (he was always hostile to the Calvinism of so many Scots), free land under the Homestead Act, and a chance for every aspiring lad. Dos Passos lampooned the myth and the man in a sub-Joycean manner in the "Prince of Peace" section of *The 42nd Parallel*:

Andrew Carnegie
was born in Dunfermline in
Scotland,
came over to the States in an
immigrant
ship worked as bobbinboy in a
textile factory
fired boilers
clerked in a bobbin factory at
\$2.50 a week
ran round Philadelphia with
telegrams as a Western Union
messenger
learned the Morse code was
telegraph operator on the
Pennsy lines
was a military telegraph operator
in the Civil War and
always saved his pay;
whenever he had a dollar he
invested it ...

The sarcasm goes on, hymning Carnegie's many successful investments, until the conclusion:

Andrew Carnegie gave millions
for peace
and libraries and scientific
institutes and endowments
and thrift
whenever he made a billion dollars
he endowed an institution to
promote universal peace
always
except in time of war.

Indeed, some of Nasaw's narrative cannot avoid sounding somewhat like the first half of this. (Carnegie's early success even had a direct relationship with his greatest natural disadvantage: that of diminutive stature, which made people want to exempt him from physical labor. His sheer luck exceeds that of Denry Machin in Arnold Bennett's *The Card*.) But an early note obtrudes itself. The boy was evidently rather

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—Sam Harris



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by **SAM HARRIS**

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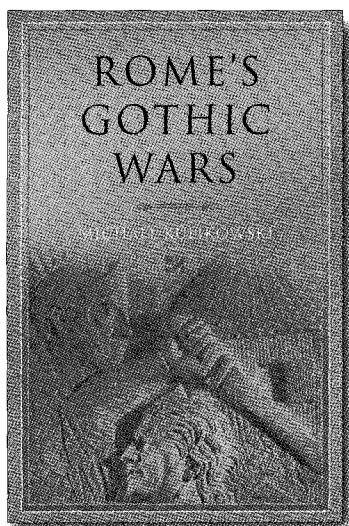


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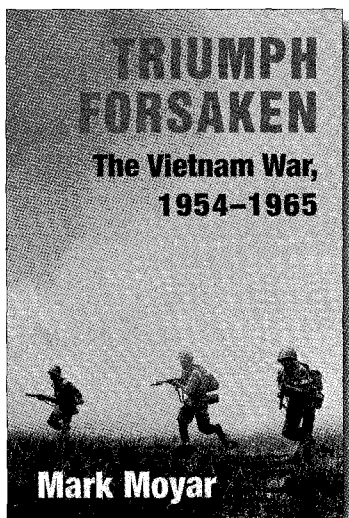
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embarrassed by his ineffectual father, and seems to have at least once pretended that he was dead. He killed him off three and a half years early in his *Autobiography* as well. Nasaw has no difficulty in showing this and other uplifting Carnegie books to be replete with stories that are improved rather than "improving." One of the first of these is a case of what we would now call insider trading, whereby, in return for services rendered, the aspirant entrepreneur acquired some sleeping-car stock that was poised to leap in value. It would from then on be his habit to ensure that his careful investments were placed in companies that did business with his own, or were otherwise beholden to, or vulnerable to, him. Carnegie was an early believer in vertical and horizontal integration, or in what used vulgarly to be called monopoly.

There is a certain affected nostalgia these days for a supposed epoch when businessmen were engaged in making things rather than money. Andrew Carnegie was indeed interested in utility and technique, and in the details of manufacturing, but as Nasaw demonstrates, his claim not to have manipulated the stock market was just a part of his later "iron and steel" self-image:

From 1866, when he returned from his year-long tour of Europe, to 1872, when he entered the steel business, Carnegie would accumulate the fortune that was later reinvested in his steel mills by doing precisely what he would later condemn: buying and selling shares in companies whose assets he knew were worth far less than the value of their stock.

Another source of revenue was real-estate speculation, itself a candy-from-baby proposition for anyone who knew where railroad tracks were about to be laid. The same simple skill—of having a bridge-building company plus a partnership in the mill that supplied that company with its iron—enabled Carnegie to deal himself a considerable hand in the westward expansion mandated by President Andrew Johnson. With his keen all-rounder's eye, Nasaw writes:

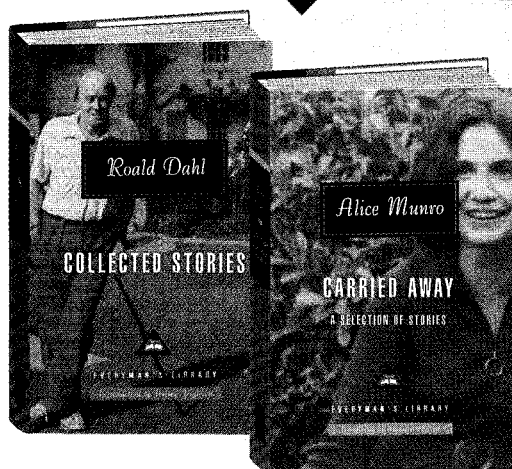
Carnegie had to raise capital himself by selling bridge bonds and stocks. But before he could do this, he had to get commitments from the railroads to

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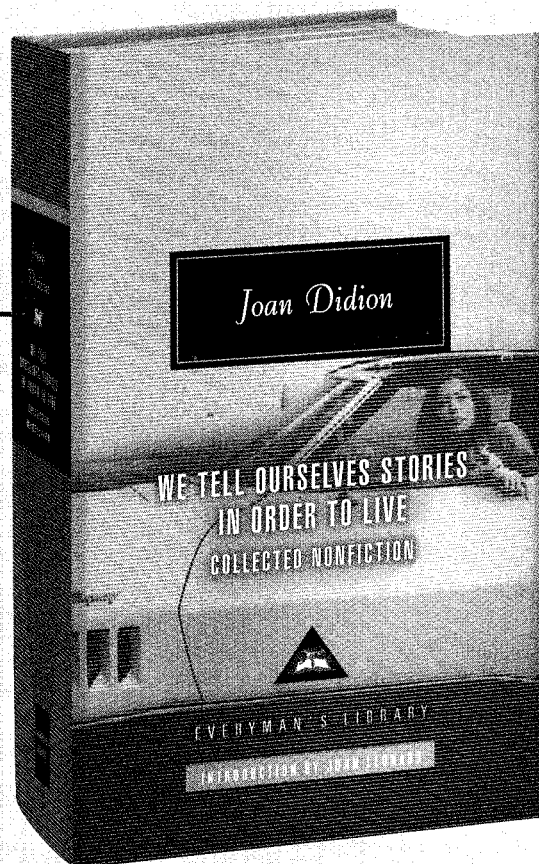
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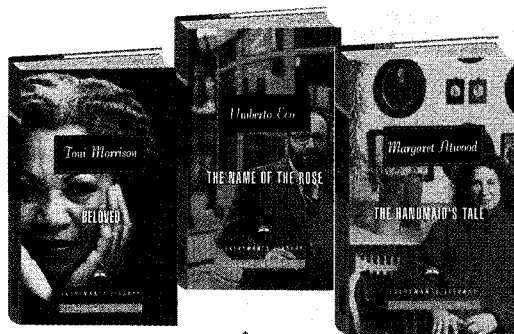


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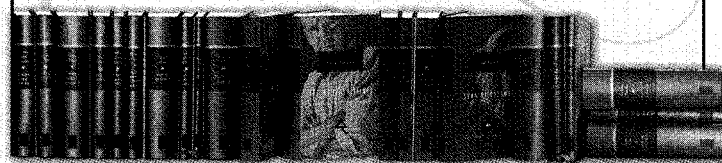


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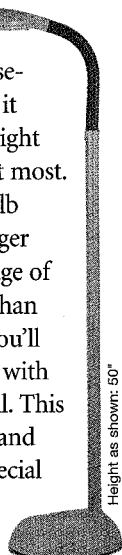
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pay tolls to use the proposed bridges, arrange for terminals and freight yards to be built, secure rights-of-way, purchase the needed land, and design the approachways. He then had to write up the prospectuses.

Bridge building, need it be said, is an honorable occupation, with distinguished ancestors such as Thomas Paine. It is also a good metaphor of humanism and benevolence. As he began to find himself rich, Carnegie began also to concern himself with the state of his soul. "The amassing of wealth," he wrote in a memo to himself, was "one of the worst species of idolatry." From then on he resolved to "make no effort to increase fortune, but spend the surplus each year for benevolent purposes." That was in December 1868. His great period of amassment was still ahead of him.

The critical difference between his first accumulations and his later ones is, I think, that the second phase made of him a large-scale employer. Given the volatile state of the labor movement at the time (largely composed of immigrant strivers like himself) and the ruthless imperatives of capital, there was no avoiding a showdown over who was to be master. Carnegie took care to absent himself from the country during the bloody confrontations at Homestead in 1892, leaving Frick to take the fire (and literally at that, when he was shot in his office by Alexander Berkman), and this argues either an attack of conscience or a display of that hypocrisy that was not unknown in do-gooding nineteenth-century tycoons. The stain of it never left him. When Carnegie took his great public stand against President William McKinley's annexation of the Philippine Islands, John Hay wrote, in a sarcastic letter, that Carnegie

says the Administration will fall in irretrievable ruin the moment it shoots down one insurgent Filipino. He does not seem to reflect that the Government is in a somewhat robust condition even after shooting down several citizens in his interests at Homestead.

This gibe echoes that of Dos Passos, but Nasaw very fairly shows that Carnegie was sincere in opposing

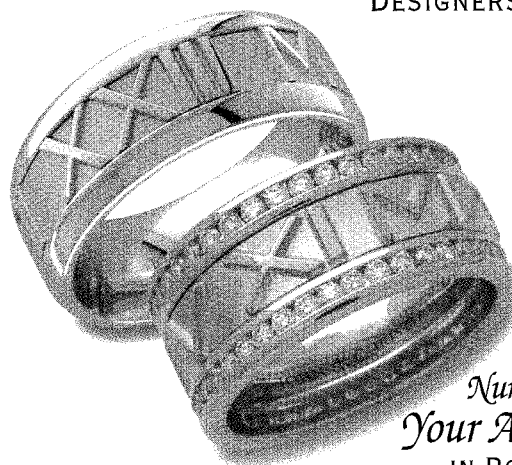
imperialism and war. The industrialist's voluminous writings on the subject make this plain. He was genuinely convinced that America should be a republic and not an empire. This did not involve him in any contradiction in theory (Adam Smith, too, had believed empires to be wasteful and inefficient), but in practice it did provide the rare spectacle of a defense contractor opposing the policies that would have crammed his coffers. Carnegie Steel furnished the armor plate for the United States Navy, but its proprietor argued for a reduction in fleets and for what would have been a precursor to the League of Nations. The energy that Carnegie expended on this cause was the equal of anything he had put into his titanic private empire of business.

If one had to summarize both the scope and the generosity of the man, as well as his impact, the best case might be that of his relationship with William Jennings Bryan. During the presidential campaign of 1896, Carnegie had done his considerable best—in essays and articles, and in massive contributions to Mark Hanna's slush fund—to expose and defeat this crank and windbag on the sole issue of the gold standard. He spent a fortune directing propaganda at Bryan's own base among the low-income voters in marginal states, and deserves some credit for McKinley's victory in a hard-fought election. H. L. Mencken even thought it was possible that Bryan had really "won" it. But within a short time Carnegie was approaching the very man he had described as a charlatan, and inviting Bryan to join with him in opposing "the twin evils of imperialism and militarism" that were represented by McKinley's policies in Cuba and the Philippines. Ultimately defeated, and eventually demoralized, in all his dreams of stopping that war—and the next one in South Africa, and the "Great" one that erupted in 1914—Carnegie failed even in his unusual promise to give away all his spare money. His death did not quite shield him from the sad realization that not even such a vast expenditure would have sufficed to ransom the world. ▀

Christopher Hitchens is an Atlantic contributing editor and a Vanity Fair columnist.

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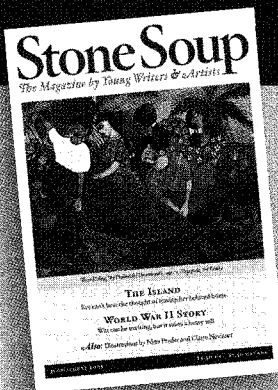


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Cover to Cover

A guide to additional releases

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CURRENT AFFAIRS



Off the Books

by Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh (Harvard)

A sociologist examines the underground economy of a poor Chicago neighborhood and discovers a thriving system of licit and illicit exchange. Although the resourcefulness of certain drug dealers, back-alley mechanics, and fly-by-night day-care providers is remarkable, Venkatesh argues that under-the-table transactions work to further separate their participants from the economic mainstream.

The Way to Win

by Mark Halperin and John F. Harris (Random House)

Two ultra-insider political journalists sketch a road map for prospective 2008 presidential hopefuls and bemoan the media "Freak Show" that will make those unlucky candidates' lives a shallow, over-exposed nightmare. Halperin and Harris's observations manage to be both knowing and learned, but their zest for the horse race is everywhere palpable, and so renders their good-government protestations a little suspect.

HISTORY



Justice for All

by Jim Newton (Riverhead)

A thorough and enlightening biography of Earl Warren, a man responsible for no shortage of polarizing Supreme Court decisions: *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, and *Miranda v. Arizona*, as well as the conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in assassinating John F. Kennedy. Newton avers that Warren had an instinctively conservative temperament somewhat at odds with his liberal legacy, and presents his life as a "reminder that centrism today is a lonely idea, honored mostly in the breach."

The Classical World

by Robin Lane Fox (Basic)

An Oxford classicist provides this sweeping and stylish history ranging

from Homer's Greece to Rome in the second century A.D. Fox's command of his material seems effortlessly complete, and the events of his narrative feel surprisingly immediate.

Iron Kingdom

by Christopher Clark (Harvard)

From the military and agricultural innovations of Frederick the Great to nineteenth-century high academic politics to Bismarck's social-security system, this magisterial and remarkably well-written history of Prussia traces back to the eighteenth century the region's surprisingly tolerant and intellectually rich culture. Clark, a Cambridge historian, suggests that the world is poorer for Prussia's absence.

The Fire

by Jörg Friedrich (Columbia)

Recently, many Germans have taken to seeing themselves as victims of atrocities inflicted by the Allied air campaign during the Second World War. Depending on one's point of view, this is evidence either of a mature effort to see the war afresh or of a chronic obtuseness coupled with an unlovely tendency toward self-pity and self-righteousness. This haunting book, which recounts the effects of the bombing campaign, is largely responsible for Germans' new perspective. Written by a formerly left-wing Berlin-based historian, it has aroused a sensation in Germany, where both peace activists and neo-Nazis have lauded it. Forceful, incendiary, and selective in its arguments, it's now translated into English.

Pathfinders

by Felipe Fernández-Armesto (Norton)

In this elegant survey of human exploration from prehistory to the present, a prominent British historian describes humanity's long, slow discovery of its scattered constituent parts. For all the explorers' apparent gains, however, Fernández-Armesto somewhat poignantly regards their efforts as "a march of folly, in which almost every step forward has been the failed outcome of an attempted leap ahead."

Dark Side of the Moon

by Gerard J. DeGroot (NYU)

DeGroot presents a more focused chronicle of exploration, concentrating on the utter uselessness of NASA's lunar missions, boondoggles every bit as myopic and costly as the Cold War that spawned them.

SOCIETY and CULTURE



The Female Thing

by Laura Kipnis (Pantheon)

In acid, intelligent essays on "envy, sex, dirt, and vulnerability"—here defined as the four primary regions of the female psyche—the author of *Against Love* presents an overview of the present's extremely complicated relationship to feminism and femininity.

What Paul Meant

by Garry Wills (Viking)

The author of *What Jesus Meant* turns to the apostle most often blamed for steering Christianity toward a joyless rigidity. Wills takes a more positive view, arguing that Paul's epistles (which predated the Gospels) "stand closer to Jesus than do any other words in the New Testament."

Moving the Chains

by Charles P. Pierce (FSG)

A Boston-based sportswriter chronicles a season in the life of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady. A lowly draft pick who rose to Super Bowl stardom through honesty, thrift, and hard work, Brady is no doubt admirable, but that Pierce is admiring nearly to a fault proves distracting as the chapters go by.

Jim Brown

by Mike Freeman (William Morrow)

A more complex figure than Brady, Jim Brown was, in the eyes of this biographer, "the greatest pure football player the sport has ever known"—not to mention a civil-rights activist, the first black action-movie star, and the unwitting quarry of a hyperactive FBI. From Brown's early heroics to his occasionally violent, uncertain, and disappointing later life, his story is as all-American in its way as Brady's.

Ringside

by Budd Schulberg (Ivan R. Dee)

In this anthology of boxing reportage, the veteran novelist and screenwriter casts his eye on the sweet science, from Tom Molineaux and Tom Cribb's marathon

thirty-nine-round bare-knuckle brawl in 1810 to the more recent exploits of Lennox Lewis and Floyd Mayweather Jr. There's an operatic, carnival-barker quality to Schulberg's reporting (Evander Holyfield's Tyson-nibbled ear becomes a "cannibalized auricle," and said nibbling is judged "sick, sad, sordid, and psycho") that reflects the high-low vertigo of the best sportswriting.

Spy: The Funny Years

by Kurt Andersen, Graydon Carter, and George Kalogerakis (Miramax)

An anthology/memoir tracking the first seven years of the legendary satire rag, compiled by three of its original editors. When the authors note in the introduction that it would be simply too self-promoting to endorse one journalist's recent claim that "We're all Spy now," all parties seem to have it right.

From Counterculture to Cyberculture

by Fred Turner (Chicago)

Disentangling strands of beaded network cable, Turner recaps the turn of events by which the hippieish brain trust behind the *Whole Earth Catalog* helped bring about the digital age, co-opting in the process the very military-industrial-technology complex its members once railed against.

FICTION

The Light of Evening

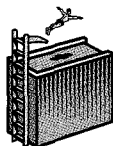
by Edna O'Brien
(Houghton Mifflin)

With her lush prose, the prolific O'Brien sensually evokes the early-twentieth-century Irish experience. The story is typical and, because it is so vivid, unique to her protagonist, a seventy-seven-year-old woman, seriously ill, who reviews her life as she awaits the arrival of her daughter. Less arresting sections of the novel are from the overly intellectual daughter's point of view. Despite love affairs and marriages, it's the expectations and disappointments between mothers and daughters that form the heart of this book.

Every Eye

by Isobel English (Black Sparrow)

This brief, emotionally restrained novel, released in Britain in 1956 but only now being published in the United States, is one of just three written by English, whose talents Muriel Spark and John Betjeman enormously admired. The plot, in which the narrator's honeymoon on a Spanish island collides with her half-understood past, is mostly too subtle for



drama (although the moment of impact provides a nice punch), but English's writing is both dead-on and gorgeous.

Inés of My Soul

by Isabel Allende (Harper Collins)

Passionate and bold, like Allende's fictional women, Inés Suárez escaped a life of tatting in sixteenth-century Spain and became, arguably, the mother of Chile. In her authoritative style, Allende has dramatized actual events to produce an epic about the career of this little-known but significant conquistadora that's well-grounded but doesn't linger over historical detail. As always, Allende focuses on the story, in this case one propelled by lusts of various kinds.

Julius Winsome

by Gerard Donovan (Overlook)

At once elegantly written and gripping, Donovan's third novel—in which a book-centric, reclusive, and disturbingly sympathetic man exacts revenge after his dog is deliberately shot by a hunter—juxtaposes an understated tone and the unforgiving, inhuman landscape of northern Maine with extremes of human emotion and action.

Nature Girl

by Carl Hiaasen (Knopf)

Hiaasen drags us through the Thousand Islands with a relentlessly dysfunctional and immensely entertaining cast of characters. There's half-Seminole Sammy Tigertail, to whom bad things keep happening and who just wants to be left alone. There's the engagingly manic-depressive Honey Santana and her long-suffering twelve-year-old son, Fry. There's Honey's ex-husband, who still loves her against his better judgment. And then there are the villains, who all get what they deserve (and then some). This is a fun, fun ride.

Hollywood Station

by Joseph Wambaugh (Little, Brown)

Wambaugh, one of the originators—if not *the* originator—of the modern police novel, returns after a long hiatus to the fictionalized inner workings of the LAPD. Here he tracks a series of seemingly unrelated stories in the jurisdiction of L.A.'s Hollywood Station, and offers all the characteristic Wambaugh magic: unlikable and conflicted characters we grow to love; a perfect mix of good guys and bad (and a confusion, sometimes, about which are which); and small vignettes that tie together seamlessly by the end.

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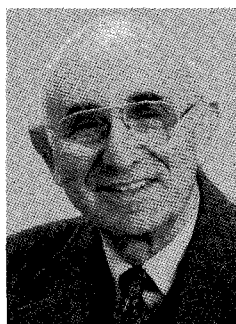
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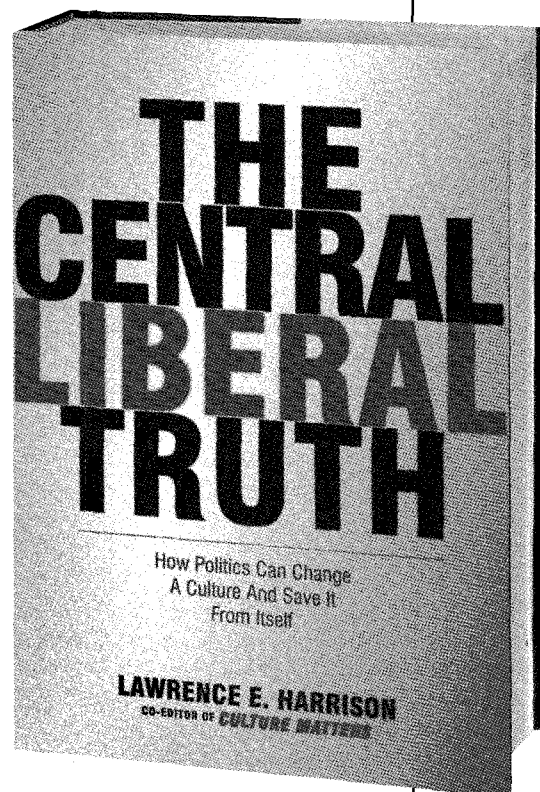
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"The purpose of life is not to be happy.
It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate,
to have it make some difference that you
have lived and lived well."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson



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Federal Employee of the Year : Nancy Cox

Chasing the evolution of influenza has kept Centers for Disease Control and Prevention virologist Nancy Cox on the run for 31 years.

Nancy Cox wants to stop playing defense. As a virologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since 1975, she has spent her entire career chasing a nimble and stealthy opponent that has always been at least one step ahead: the rapidly mutating influenza virus.

The fast pace of influenza's evolution, the hefty toll it takes each year, and the constant potential for a global pandemic were reasons why she chose to study the virus in the first place.

Cox first battled the virus as a 9-year-old in Iowa in 1957, when the Asian flu pandemic killed millions. She beat the bug, and went on to study it at Cambridge University. During a fellowship at CDC, she saw firsthand the complex interplay between science and public policy when the United States confronted outbreaks of swine flu and Legionnaire's disease and had to decide whether to provide vaccinations. Instead of returning to academia as she had planned, she chose to stay at CDC.

"I could get up every morning and know that what I was doing was important," she says.

Now, as head of CDC's influenza division,

Cox has assembled a team of cutting-edge scientists whose aim is to take the offensive. "We're always chasing the evolution of the virus, and what we'd really like to do is get ahead of the curve," she says. By using genetic data and patterns of evolution, they hope to be able to anticipate influenza's next move—predicting which strains are likely to outsmart antibodies and which could defy vaccines.

One group of viruses is of particular interest. Called H5N1, it lives mainly in birds. Since 2003, though, H5N1 viruses have attacked more than 200 people in 10 countries. If they were to mutate into a form that could pass easily from human to human, the effect would be devastating. "Obviously, we're very, very concerned," says Jacqueline Katz, chief of the immunology and pathogenesis branch under Cox. "We all believe it is a potential pandemic threat."

But while avian flu makes headlines, it's only one part of her job; seasonal influenza kills thousands of Americans each year. Cox helps update the vaccines twice a year, and her innovations in this area have saved countless lives. And despite the fact that



Cox works on high-level health policy and management issues, "she's still very much in touch with the science that goes on," Katz says. "She always sheds light on an issue other people may not consider."

Cox's greatest accomplishment, according to Katz, has been building the CDC influenza team. That achievement helped pave the way for the decision earlier this year to elevate the influenza group from a branch to a division. "My goal," says Cox, "is that when I retire, they will carry on and not miss a beat." ★

Career Achievement : William D. Phillips

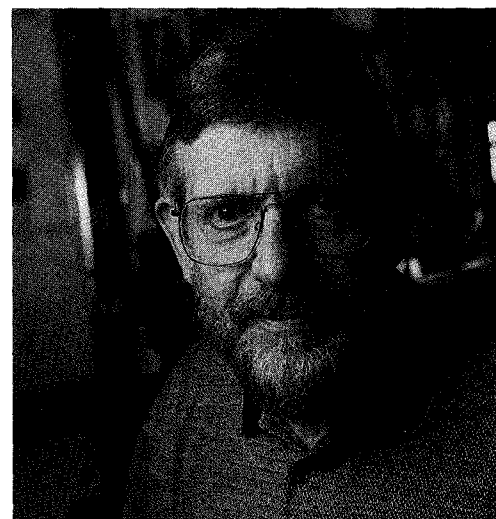
A Nobel Prize winner in physics, William D. Phillips has done more than improve the accuracy of clocks—he's an ambassador for public service.

For a world-renowned scientist, William D. Phillips is surprisingly easy to talk to. In 1997, he became the first government employee to receive the Nobel Prize in physics (which he shared with two other scientists) for research conducted in pursuit of an agency mission—namely, using lasers to cool atoms and improve the accuracy of clocks—at the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

In the late 1970s, Phillips set out to slow atoms down. How and why he did so is a much more complicated story involving Einstein's theory of relativity, lasers tuned to a frequency that creates an "optical molasses," a fountain that sprays atoms, and many years of hard work. Suffice to say that Phillips and his collaborators managed to slow cesium atoms from the speed of sound to the comparatively glacial pace of less than one centimeter per second. The temperature? Within one-millionth of a degree of absolute zero—about 100 times colder than anyone had predicted—or, as Phillips says, "more than a million times colder than outer space."

His work transcends the realm of time measurement, opening new ways to study the interaction between radiation and matter. And one emerging application, called quantum computing, could prove invaluable for national security. "What he has done is to introduce a whole new field of physics," says Katharine B. Gebbie, director of NIST's physics laboratory. Gebbie received the Service to America Medal for Career Achievement in 2002.

Since receiving the Nobel Prize, he has made it his mission to give as many public talks as possible—not just before elite scientific societies and promising graduate students, but also at elementary schools, senior centers, churches, science fairs and Girl Scout gatherings. "I just don't see how in good conscience you can refuse to do that," Phillips says. His willingness to accept invitations to speak has required nearly constant travel. "It has changed his whole life," Gebbie says. "He is an ambassador not only for science and physics, but also for government."



Receiving the Nobel Prize was "an almost unimaginable honor," says Phillips, who spent much of his childhood experimenting with household chemicals and putting anything and everything under a microscope his parents gave him. He felt that the award came with a responsibility. "People will come to listen to you simply because they want to hear a Nobel laureate," he says. "As scientists, it's very important for us to try to interpret science to the general public and to convey to young people how exciting science is." ★

STAN KAADY

JAMES KECIEV

Call to Service: Christina Sanford

Heading up the legal office at the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, Christina Sanford helped craft a plan for replacing Iraq's interim government.

When Christina Sanford turned 30 in August 2004, she celebrated the milestone by going out with friends and colleagues. The gathering was far from your typical birthday party, though. Sanford had arrived in Baghdad a month earlier to head the U.S. Embassy's legal office in Iraq, and she toasted her new decade at the Green Zone's finest establishment, the famous Al-Rashid Hotel.

Sanford's position normally would have been filled by someone with much more experience. But not many people were jumping at the chance to spend time in Iraq, and Sanford had earned the respect of her superiors early on at the State Department. She started her career there on Sept. 10, 2001. When terrorists attacked New York and Washington the next day, she threw herself into helping facilitate evacuations of embassies in countries where Americans might be in danger. "Immediately, I felt like I was working on something important," she says. Her efforts didn't go

unnoticed; Sanford was asked to serve as special assistant to the department's chief legal adviser.

In Baghdad, Ambassador James Jeffrey, the State Department's coordinator for Iraq policy, was prepared to intervene if Sanford got in over her head. Instead, she exceeded everyone's expectations—taking a lead role in Iraq's transition from an appointed government to an elected one, and in securing property for a new U.S. embassy in Baghdad. "I know of nobody who, in such a junior position, did so extraordinarily well at the highest levels of the U.S. government," Jeffrey says.

Sanford's "shining moment," says Jeffrey, occurred after the Iraqi elections in January 2005, when she helped craft a plan for replacing the interim government. She reviewed other countries' constitutions and parliamentary systems, then worked with Iraq's deputy prime minister to develop several options—including a rolling transition, in which elected officials would gradually replace the interim government, and a "big bang" transition, in which the transfer of power would occur all at once.

Sanford then sat down with Iraq's chief justice and reviewed the relevant legal and political factors. She had favored the big bang approach, but together they crafted a two-part plan where



the legislative branch would take power before the executive arm.

Sanford also served as the lead U.S. attorney in negotiations for a new embassy in Baghdad—a process complicated by a typographical error that raised questions about whether the interim government had authority to assign property to foreign governments. Sanford had to convince the attorney for the prime minister that the Iraqis could come to the table.

The security situation didn't make her work any easier. Sanford often had to travel outside the Green Zone, and yet even within its relative protection, the area where she lived was shelled regularly—at 6:30 in the morning and 8:30 at night. On many days, she and her team had to put on flak vests and helmets while working at their desks as mortars landed nearby. "You just keep working because there's a lot to do," Sanford says. "We felt like we had a purpose." ★

JAMES KEGLEY

Homeland Security: Nancy Powell

Despite not knowing much about bird flu at the start, Nancy Powell led a U.S. initiative to establish a worldwide protocol for response to the virus.

During her nearly 30 years at the State Department, Nancy Powell had focused on Africa and South Asia and served as ambassador to Uganda, Ghana and Pakistan. But when President Bush announced last year that the State Department would lead the United States in creating an international partnership to combat avian influenza and prepare for a possible pandemic, Undersecretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky asked Powell to direct the initiative.

Powell dove into her new role as senior coordinator for avian influenza and infectious diseases. "She's someone who learns her subject very, very well," Dobriansky says. In just four months, Powell coordinated the expertise that was scattered across federal agencies and established an interagency task force at the State Department. She worked with the United Nations' coordinator for avian influenza and the World Health Organization to develop a preliminary global containment strategy. She oversaw

the international sections of the national strategy for bird flu, which outlines the concrete steps people must take to avoid being caught unprepared. She played a key role in securing \$1.9 billion in pledges to help affected countries improve surveillance and develop response plans.

By achieving so much in such a short span, Powell exceeded even Dobriansky's expectations. What kept her going was the urgency of the task. "In about a three-week span, we had outbreaks in 10 countries," Powell says. "That spurred us on, and we had to move much more quickly." Health issues such as HIV/AIDS and avian flu are relatively new terrain for State. Yet helping other nations prepare for a pandemic isn't merely a humanitarian mission—it's also critical to national security. Viruses, after all, don't recognize human-made national borders, and neither do the migratory birds that carry them.

Just over a month into the assignment, Turkey confirmed its first two human cases of avian flu. Ten more cases quickly followed. Powell helped coordinate the international team that assisted the Turkish government in its response. She also sent experts to consult with neighboring countries to emphasize the importance of preparing for bird flu and to provide expertise on designing a response strategy. "Most of them had not done any real



planning on avian influenza," Powell says. "This outbreak was a shock to their system."

That same month, Powell led the delegation to the International Pledging Conference on Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza in Beijing, where she announced that the United States would commit \$334 million for the global campaign against bird flu. The challenge was to encourage other countries to make the initiative a priority and to remain open to more effective methods of response. That's where Powell's skill as a negotiator proved critical. "She represented the United States very well in articulating what we were doing," Dobriansky says.

After completing her work on bird flu in March, Powell moved on to fighting another international threat: terrorism. As the first national intelligence officer for South Asia, she has brought the same tenacity and determination to leading the National Intelligence Council's expanded coverage of the region. ★

JAMES KEGLEY



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International Affairs: Mark S. Ward

Mark S. Ward was the go-to guy for allocating federal aid after the Asian tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan.

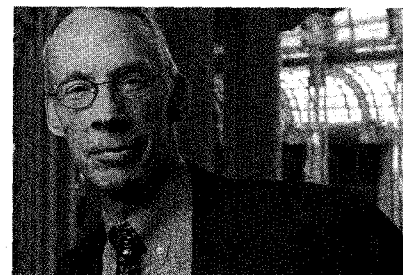
It was one of the worst natural disasters on record. On Dec. 26, 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean triggered a series of tsunamis that devastated coastal areas in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India and other countries. More than 200,000 people would be reported missing or dead, and many more lost homes and jobs. As the international community prepared for a massive relief effort, the U.S. Agency for International Development turned to Mark S. Ward to lead its long-term response.

"He brings years of experience, a calm and reassuring demeanor, an incredible work ethic, and deep commitment to the issues," says Daniel F. Runde, director of USAID's Office of Global Development Alliances. So when another major disaster struck less than a year later—the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan that killed tens of thousands and left millions homeless—Ward again took charge of USAID's recovery and reconstruction efforts.

In Ward's domain, speed isn't the most important element. In deciding how best to allocate hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid for the two disasters, it was critical to devise a big-picture strategy before taking on such projects as reconstructing roads and water systems, providing business loans and job training, and opening schools and health clinics.

His efforts are paying off. "The greatest sign of success in Indonesia and the thing I'm most proud of," Ward says, "is that there are now hundreds of young people building a first-class highway from Banda Aceh to Meulaboh. It kills me to go out there and see the money that hasn't been very effectively spent."

That's why he has added to his already formidable responsibilities the task of advising two private aid initiatives: the Bush-Clinton Houston Tsunami Relief Fund, spearheaded by the former presidents, and the South Asia Earthquake Relief Fund, led by executives of five large U.S. corporations. Ward toured the affected regions with the former presidents and the business leaders, and has spent countless hours advising them on how to ensure the money goes to the right places.



"We lean on him very heavily," says Mike Conway, chief of staff to Citigroup's chairman emeritus Sandy Weill. This summer, Ward helped broker a \$12 million grant from the earthquake relief fund to an organization in Pakistan that is going to build schools. "The challenge was to convince the business leaders to rely on a Pakistani organization that they had never heard of," he says. "I knew from my work in Pakistan that this organization could do the kind of construction they were talking about."

Ward has since taken on a new task: guiding long-term recovery in Lebanon. He hopes to forge more public-private connections in the future. "If we know that we can't do it all, and we know there is a lot of private money that is going to go to the effort, how does the U.S. government somehow influence decision-making in a way that is not overbearing but is helpful?" ★

JAMES KEGLEY

Citizen Services: Thomas Casadevall

Thomas Casadevall and quick-thinking U.S. Geological Survey regional managers launched boats and rescue teams in New Orleans in the hours following Hurricane Katrina.

The events of late August and early September of 2005 are now painfully familiar: Hurricane Katrina's landfall on the Gulf Coast, the devastating winds and storm surge, the breached levees, the looting and violence and—most of all—the catastrophically slow and inadequate federal response. But amid all the bad news, there's one Katrina story you might not have heard.

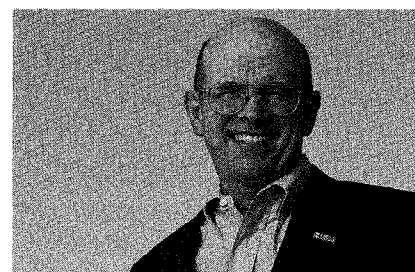
Early in the morning after the hurricane hit Louisiana, Thomas Casadevall, the U.S. Geological Survey's central region director, received a phone call from Greg Smith and Charles Demas, who lead USGS centers in Lafayette and Baton Rouge, respectively. The state of Louisiana had put out a call for help to all government agencies.

"They needed small, flat boats that could be launched from portions of interstate highways that were flooded," Casadevall says. "They also needed people who were somewhat familiar with

New Orleans." Smith and Demas called Casadevall, their supervisor, because they wanted to help with search-and-rescue operations. USGS happened to have the right kind of boats and licensed boat operators who could find their way around the city. "They're Louisiana natives," Casadevall says. "They know those waters better than anyone."

Search and rescue falls far outside the USGS mission to provide scientific information about the Earth. The safe choice for Casadevall would have been to tell the teams in Louisiana to stay put, at least until he could get official clearance from Washington. But that's not what he did. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, and the desire of the Louisiana scientists to respond to the desperate need so close by, he gave Smith and Demas the green light. "He wasn't awaiting word from headquarters," says Patrick Leahy, acting director of USGS. "He informed me, and I supported him."

From Aug. 31 to Sept. 5, about 25 USGS scientists worked from before dawn to after dark with an interagency team that helped save hundreds of people and brought food and water to many more. Some of the scientists had their own worries—relatives in New Orleans or damage to their homes—yet they stopped only when so much help had arrived from across



the country that search-and-rescue logistics became overwhelming.

"At that time we still had our other missions to accomplish," says Casadevall. The scientists refocused on monitoring water levels, installing stream gauges and testing the water that had flooded New Orleans as it was pumped back into Lake Pontchartrain.

USGS also helped rescue workers overcome a major obstacle. "Because of the extent of the flooding, maps were useless," says Robert Doyle, USGS deputy director. "Street signs were underwater and house numbers were underwater." The USGS scientists were able to take the electronically recorded origination points of cell phone calls to 911 centers and translate them into latitude and longitude coordinates that helicopter pilots and boat drivers could plug into GPS systems. Leahy says, "They are in the best traditions of the Geological Survey." ★

DON CUDNEY

Justice & Law Enforcement: Martin Harrell

Martin Harrell, a prosecutor at EPA, fights to ensure America stays green.

The warehouse was a disaster waiting to happen. Located near a hotel and community college in downtown Pottstown, Pa., it served as a storage facility for Pyramid Chemical Sales Co. Pyramid's owner, Joel Udell, had been keeping chemicals in the warehouse since the mid-1980s. By 1998, it was crammed with thousands of corroded metal drums, damaged boxes and poorly labeled containers filled with toxins, poisonous chemicals, flammable substances and other hazardous waste.

For years, Udell ignored orders to address numerous violations at the site. He sold unusable chemicals at a steep discount to unwitting companies across the United States and shipped 29 containers holding roughly 300 tons of waste to an alleged Nigerian buyer via the Port of Rotterdam, where they sat for three years before the Dutch government had to pay for incineration.

When the Justice Department brought felony charges against Udell, Martin Harrell, a senior counsel for EPA's Region 3, led the prosecution. Udell pleaded guilty and was sentenced to pay more than \$2 million in restitution and fines, serve six months of house confinement and perform 500 hours of community service in Pottstown.

Harrell "has a national reputation as one of the leading experts in environmental criminal prosecution," says Cecil Rodrigues, EPA's acting deputy regional counsel for Region 3. In addition to training other EPA lawyers and investigators on criminal enforcement issues, teaching an environmental enforcement course at Villanova University, and serving on an international team that has trained police, prosecutors and regulators in Eastern Europe and South Africa, Harrell has expanded the role of EPA attorneys in the prosecution process.

In a case against the city of Roanoke, Va., for example, Harrell introduced an innovative punishment. Rather than simply pay a fine, the city would develop a waste compliance program and then host three-day training seminars for city attorneys, public works directors and other senior officials from 100 Virginia municipalities.

Even his choice of profession has required him to overcome significant obstacles. Soft-spoken and barely 5-foot-7, he doesn't match the TV image of a prosecutor, but he's been able to rely on his intelligence and willingness to see shades of gray. ★

Science & Environment: Norden Huang

A mathematical error proved fruitful for Norden Huang—and other scientists trying to interpret data.

In 1995, Norden Huang wrote a paper for *Advances in Applied Mechanics* in which he used, incorrectly, a set of mathematical formulations called the Hilbert Transform. He called the editors and asked for his paper back, but they instead gave him a two-month extension for revision.

"In trying to correct my mistakes, I stumbled upon this matter," says Huang, who retired in September as chief scientist for oceanography at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center to teach at Taiwan's National Central University. By "this matter," he means a whole new way to analyze data—a set of algorithms he developed and later named the Hilbert-Huang Transform. When Huang presented his findings, a Johns Hopkins University professor who had been his graduate school adviser many years earlier pointed out its significance. "He

said, 'This thing you happened upon happens once every 100 years,'" says Huang.

Huang has since been recognized by a host of awards, and HHT is described as "one of the most important discoveries in the field of applied mathematics in NASA history." Huang originally used his method to analyze ocean waves. It has since proved useful at NASA in looking for planets and black holes, testing insulation tiles for the Space Shuttle Return to Flight project, and designing the next generation of aircraft.

Huang also helps scientists from universities and other government agencies to answer previously impenetrable questions by using HHT. The method has been applied to a multitude of subjects.

The computer-simulated method is a tool for analyzing data from nonlinear and nonstationary processes with much greater precision and flexibility than was previously possible. "Once you write down a [mathematical] formula, everything is concrete," Huang explains. "It is no longer changeable." But few phenomena fit neatly into those constraints. "HHT is trying to get over this kind of limitation to get meaning out of the data," Huang says. ★

National Security: Ron McNeal

When American service members and civilians are captured or missing in Iraq or Afghanistan, it's the work of Ron McNeal that guides their safe return.

There have been many American service members and civilians missing or captured in Iraq and Afghanistan who were successfully rescued by the U.S. military. And while each recovery is, of course, a team effort, much of the credit for their safe return belongs to Ron McNeal, the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency's representative to the Tampa, Fla.-based U.S. Central Command.

McNeal was one of the chief architects of America's personnel recovery strategy for the region. That in-depth plan, which McNeal has sculpted over several years, serves as playbook for personnel recovery, outlining the exact steps to take in order to retrieve someone who has been "isolated" without needlessly disrupting the battle plan.

"We're not as effective as we want to be as long as there is anyone missing," says James Roberts, JPRA's director for operations and plans. While the recovery mission in Iraq and Afghanistan doesn't have a perfect record, Roberts says, it has been far more effective than past wars—thanks to new technologies and to McNeal's skill and dedication. "He is a strategic thinker," Roberts says. "He is very effective in laying out problem sets and proposed solutions." So effective,



Left to right: Martin Harrell, Norden Huang, Ron McNeal

in fact, that JPRA asked him to lead a team that analyzed the agency's entire strategy, a project he has been working on for about a year.

"You can find me at all levels of the command," McNeal says. "Wherever the tasks are identified that need to be improved, that's where you'll find me." He also serves as a trusted adviser on personnel recovery to high-ranking officers. "I have one mission only," McNeal says. "I provide a very clean assessment of the personnel recovery operations."

The elements put in place long before an individual is isolated are key, McNeal says. "We have three dimensions: preventing, proactive and reactive," he says. "Reactive is the lowest form of the art." McNeal points to the ongoing education and training he conducts to advance the expertise of the constantly rotating forces. "That's very, very satisfying to me," he says.

"McNeal is driven by one thing," says John Jagielski, JPRA's chief of staff: "He's a good American doing what he has to do to make sure—at least in the current war in Iraq and the war on terrorism—American soldiers, airmen and marines will all come home." ★



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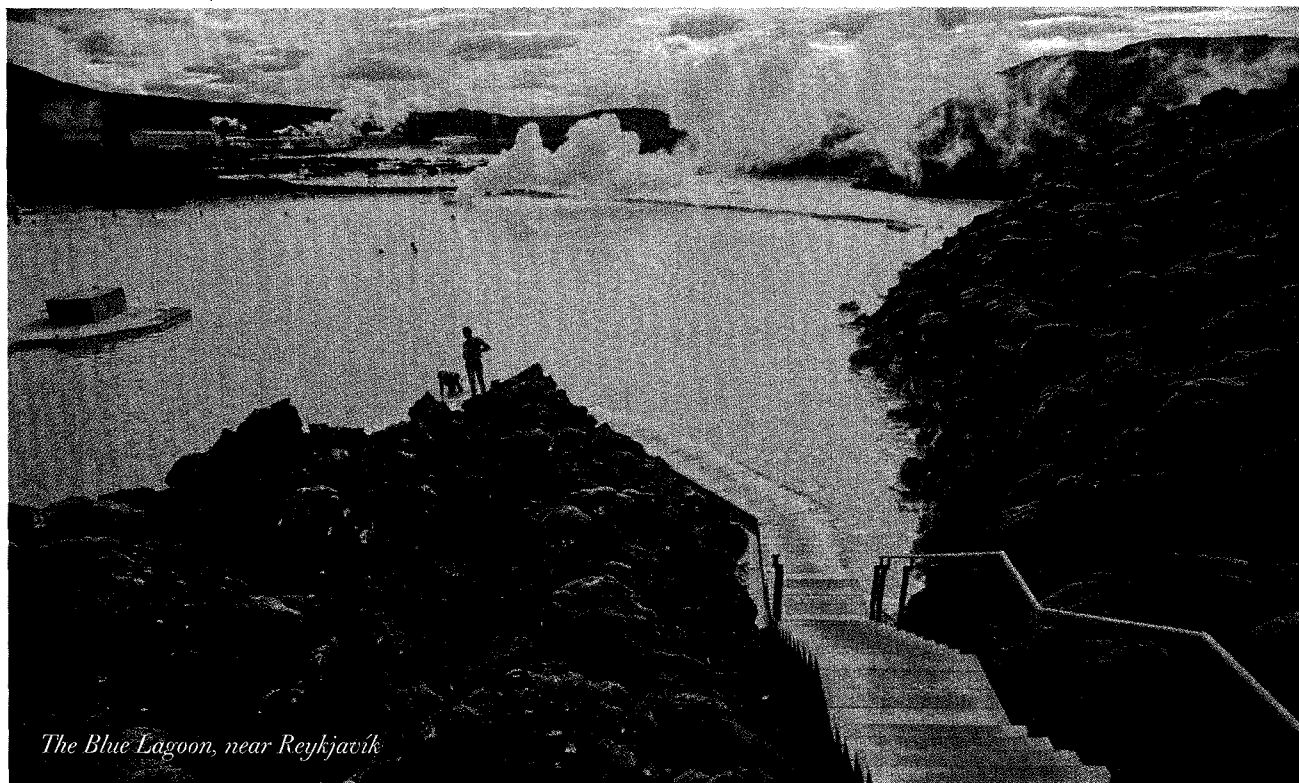


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DECEMBER 2006 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY



The Blue Lagoon, near Reykjavik

TRAVELS

In Hot Water

Midwinter pool hopping in Iceland

BY WAYNE CURTIS

When I told friends that my wife, Louise, and I were planning a January vacation in Reykjavik, I got looks that conveyed neither horror nor curiosity—simply an inability to fully process the information. *Iceland*, I could see them thinking: *lively, hip, Björk*. But *January*: *cold, bitter, dark*. I recognized their expressions as the look of a computer about to crash.

I learned I could reboot them merely by adding, “For the outdoor thermal pools and the northern lights.” Then you could hear the hard drive start humming again, and they’d say, “Nice!” By the time we left for our overnight flight from Boston,

on a frigid and blustery afternoon, I thought I could even detect hints of envy.

We arrived at Keflavik airport early the next morning and caught a shuttle bus into Reykjavik. Through the window we saw a lot of darkness and, where sodium-orange streetlights illuminated the landscape outside of town, a lot of barren lava fields. Iceland sits atop a geological rift between the new world and the old, and the lava that flows from the island’s volcanoes is, in a very literal sense, still building the nation. So Iceland has the look of a construction site on which the work was never completed. For instance, almost no landscaping

has been installed. Occasionally one sees a few shrubs, which Icelanders call “forests.” A tourism brochure I picked up enthused that the country was a “sanctuary for hay fever sufferers.”

The volcanic activity also produces hot water, lots of it. Iceland’s geothermal water is rainwater that has seeped into the ground, hit magmatic vapors, and then returned to the surface in a state of great thermal agitation. Around Reykjavik, this superheated water (nearly 400 degrees Fahrenheit) is first used to power steam turbines to make electricity. It’s then piped throughout the city to heat virtually every home and business, keeping many of the sidewalks and streets free of snow in the process. Even after all this, there’s enough left over to supply seven public pool complexes.

Vesturbæjarlaug, one of the smallest, was first on our itinerary. It was not even four in the afternoon when we set off in search of it, yet the streets were



THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

What to see and do in Iceland

A visit to one of Reykjavík's thermal pools costs about \$4, making it one of the better bargains in an expensive city. An alternative to individual admissions is the Reykjavík Tourist Card, which provides access to all pools, along with museums and other attractions; it's available in one- (\$17), two- (\$24), and three-day (\$31) increments. Full access to the **Laugar Spa** (011-354-533-0000) is about \$50. For pool descriptions, go to www.spacity.is/English/spa.html.

The **Blue Lagoon** is an easy place to get your feet wet, given its proximity to the airport; arrange a stop on your way into the city, or on your way home, through **Reykjavík Excursions** (this firm also books northern-lights tours, on the seemingly few occasions when conditions are right for viewing). The facility offers a geothermal outdoor seawater pool; spa treatments and massages, which are performed on floating mattresses; and a stylish restaurant overlooking the lagoon. A visit costs \$20.

The Blue Lagoon

240 Grindavík
011-354-420-8800
www.bluelagoon.com

Reykjavík Excursions

011-354-562-1011
www.re.is

For accommodations, try the **Hótel Frón**, on Reykjavík's central downtown street. It has seventy-one simple but comfortable rooms, fifty-two of which have kitchenettes—convenient given the high cost of eating out. A grocery store is just a short walk away.

Hótel Frón

Laugavegur
011-354-511-4666
www.hotelfron.is

The **Radisson SAS Saga Hotel** is a large, modern inn on a busy street within easy walking distance of the city center. Rooms on the higher floors have good views of either the city skyline or the distant ocean—at least when there's enough daylight to see.

Radisson SAS Saga Hotel

Hagatorg
011-354-525-9920
www.saga.reykjavik.radissonsas.com

Reykjavík's restaurants are so pricey that it's not unusual to spot tourists staring in awe at the menus posted outside, as if peering into the Grand Canyon for the first time. A beer can cost \$10, and a hamburger can set you back \$20.

Sjávarkjallarinn ("Seafood Cellar") is situated beneath a historic building, has a lean Philippe Starck decor, and has been regarded as one of the better high-end restaurants in the city since it opened, in 2003. The specialty, not surprisingly, is fresh seafood, but with Asian and Cuban influences. It's worth a splurge.

Sjávarkjallarinn

Aðalstræti 2
011-354-511-1212
www.sjavarkjallarinn.is/english.htm

Less aggressive toward the wallet is the swank downtown **Thorvaldsen Bar**, which serves comfort drinks like mojitos. The sushi menu, meanwhile, takes advantage of the ample supplies of fresh fish found in Icelandic waters. If you packed stylish clothes, this would be the place to wear them. The restaurant tends to attract a younger crowd, with hip-hop, house, and disco music for dancing on weekends.

Thorvaldsen Bar

Austurstræti 8-10
011-354-511-1413
www.thorvaldsen.is

already growing dark, though they were not swaddled in the pitch-blackness we'd anticipated; during the long twilights of late morning and midafternoon, the city takes on a pleasingly attenuated blue glow, as if lit by a large television just over the southern horizon. Reykjavík is an austere city, with gray and sand-colored buildings lining narrow streets. The bare trees dusted with snow made it seem Bergmanesque, and the occasional splash of color—a leftover string of Christmas lights, bright red lipstick on an elderly woman hunching into the wind—struck us as positively garish. Mostly, though, we noticed that almost every house had a window cracked open to let out the excess heat.

The pools we visited during our stay were uniformly modern—they had none of the hand-hewn wooden rusticity of a Finnish sauna. Vesturbæjarlaug, with its highly polished floors and smell of unfamiliar cleaning products, brought to mind an elementary school that has won awards for administrative excellence. Icelanders prefer chlorine at a bare minimum, so to keep the pools free of unwanted life forms, those in charge enforce a spirited regimen of personal hygiene: everyone must shower before entering the water. In the men's locker room, only a wall of glass separated the showers from the attendant's station, to ensure that no shortcuts were taken.

Walking wet from the shower to the outdoor pool through the wintry air requires a special talent, namely that of being able to move rapidly with high, prancing steps across frigid concrete, like a Lipizzaner stallion wearing a very small bathing suit. (Curious fact: more Speedos are sold per capita in Iceland than in any other country.) But stepping into thermal waters is like stepping into Oz: life changes from the black-and-white of imminent hypothermia to a lustrous, multidimensional world of color and warmth.

We paddled about languidly for a time in the lap pool and the free-form pool, which were warm but not hot. (The city pools are about 84 degrees Fahrenheit, on average.) Then we moved over to the nautilus-shaped hot pots—every pool complex has three to five hot pots of varied temperatures, some large enough to accommodate a family reunion. After a

REUTERS/BOB STRONG (ICELAND)

brief plunge in the deepest, hottest pool, I made my way to the shallowest, coolest one, where I spent a blissfully uncertain amount of time watching clouds scud across the late-afternoon moon.

The next morning I met with Sigmar Hauksson, the Iceland-based vice president of the European Spas Association, at a café inside Reykjavík's city hall, a modern building perched over a frozen pond. "Fifty years ago spas were not so much for pleasure, but for sick people," he told me. In recent years, however, many insurance companies stopped reimbursing for such treatments, and spas throughout Europe have had to reinvent themselves as something other than convalescent centers. (Although not entirely. "Sometimes there's the smell of whiskey on Sunday mornings," Hauksson reported. "The pools are supposed to be very good for hangovers.") So Iceland's pools have been largely updated as community centers. "People go to relax, meet friends, play with their kids," Hauksson said. "If you want to meet Irishmen, you go to the pub; for Frenchmen, you go to the café. To meet Icelanders, you go to the thermal baths."

Hauksson left, and I chatted with the café's owner while we watched some geese fight for possession of a small patch of open water. He pointed to a pale, low sun, which looked like a well-hit golf ball about to land on a distant fairway. "It's January," he said. "We're starting to come awake, like bears."

The following day I was again in mind of bears and hibernation. I was in the "relaxation room" of the Laugar Spa, which opened in 2004 and is part of a complex that includes the public pools at Laugardalslaug. The room is a dark, cave-like affair with black granite walls and spooky, Enya-like music. Several vinyl-upholstered recliners were arrayed feetfirst in a circle around an open fireplace. I was fully reclined with my eyes closed, although my efforts at relaxation were hindered by the sudden snarffles and snorts of audibly large men in Speedos snoozing nearby.

Laugardalslaug—or "Washing Valley Pool"—is on the site of the city's ancient washing pools, at the end of the main shopping street. A new addition to the

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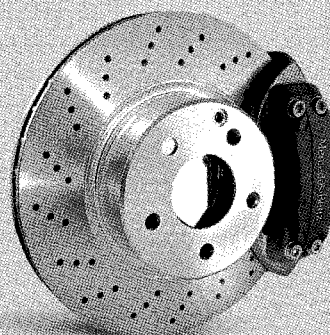


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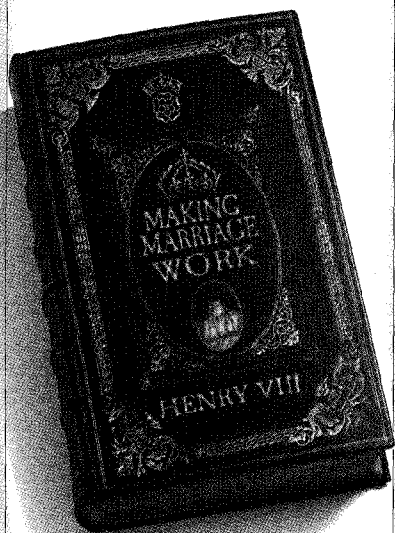
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complex includes an indoor Olympic-sized pool and, next to that, a curving, warehouse-sized fitness room with Torquemadaean quantities of treadmills, weight machines, and elliptical trainers. Outside are another large pool and five hot pots, one of which was crowded with elderly men all scowling down at the surface, as if the water of today were somehow inferior to that of their youth.

The Laugar Spa is distinctly Icelandic in its blend of the high-tech and the primeval. To enter the relaxation cave, I first needed to submit to a retina scan at the front desk. Downstairs I stared into a blue orb, and the door to the spa snapped open. The spa consists of an intricate series of dim chambers with saunas, whirlpools, soaking baths, and steam rooms. The walls and floors are, somewhat alarmingly, adorned here and there with the carved shapes of breasts and sperm squiggles. I spent many entertaining minutes playing with a motion-sensor waterfall; there's also an alcove where you can dump a bucket of ice water on yourself.

One advantage of the midwinter darkness is the ample opportunity it (in theory) provides for gazing at the colorful northern lights. Our intent was to sign up for a tour in which visitors are bused to the countryside to view the atmospheric phenomenon. These tours depart at nine each night from the central bus station, weather permitting. But when I inquired about them, the clerk at Reykjavík Excursions adopted a mournful look and said that, unfortunately, it was too cloudy that day. How long had that been the case, I asked? Pretty much the whole winter, she said, adding that certainly it would be the case for the whole of the next week as well. So Louise and I occupied our time by exploring another Icelandic phenomenon, locally called "Black Death"—a caraway-flavored spirit that does not encourage one to go gently into that dark night.

The last day, on our way to the airport, we visited the Blue Lagoon, an outdoor swimming area some thirty miles from the city. A sleek locker room and restaurant facility look out onto a jarring tableau: a chalky, turquoise-blue pond feathered with wispy white steam and

sitting amid slag heaps of lava. The lagoon, which is man-made and filled with geothermal seawater, is associated with an industrial complex that produces electricity. In the background smokestacks point skyward, giving the whole scene a sort of "Dr.-Seuss-discovers-the-Ashcan-School" sensibility.

Because of its location—convenient to the airport, but far from town—the Blue Lagoon is more popular with tourists than with locals, and it affords a wholly different social experience. (It seemed especially popular with Brits, who evidently flock to Iceland in winter to compensate for the inadequate supplies of hot water in their own flats.) Whereas the native bathers in the city pools are as unself-conscious as if sitting in their own kitchens, here everyone wore a "Hey-I'm-swimming-outside-in-winter!" face. There was more mirth and jollity here than in town, fueled in part by the bright-blue cocktails served lagoonside.

And there was mud. Vats of the stuff—white silica, to be exact—are available for spreading liberally on one's person; this, the Blue Lagoon materials say, will "cleanse, exfoliate and revitalize the skin, leaving it silky smooth." We joined in and were soon floating around wearing our "Martin-Sheen-in-Apocalypse-Now" faces. After we felt sufficiently revitalized, we breaststroked our way to a pounding artificial waterfall, which stripped off the mud (along with a layer or two of skin).

After ninety minutes of hot-water lounging, we headed toward the lockers and showered, then collected our luggage and waited for the bus to the airport. Standing at perfect ease in the wintry air, Louise and I agreed that Iceland was the very antithesis of the Caribbean, where we usually migrate for a week or so in winter: brown lava flows versus white beaches, moonlight versus sunshine, Black Death versus colorful rum drinks. But we departed with the same salubrious effect. New England's winter chill was gone from our bones, and we flew home relaxed, buoyant in spirit, and notably pinkish in skin tone. ▀

Wayne Curtis is a frequent contributor to The Atlantic and the author of And a Bottle of Rum: A History of the New World in Ten Cocktails.

Dumbing Down Wine

Chain stores threaten to destroy independent wineshops—and your chances of finding interesting wine

BY CORBY KUMMER

A recent battle in my home state of Massachusetts made me think about where and how I like to buy wine. The issue is one many states face: whether to allow some or all grocery and big-box stores to sell wine and beer. In Massachusetts, owners of wine and liquor stores—quaintly called “package stores” (you carry the alcohol out in packages, rather than consume it on the premises)—may hold no more than three licenses. Whole Foods, for example, can sell wine at only three of its seventeen Massachusetts stores. Naturally, it doesn’t like this. Neither do other grocery-chain owners like Stop & Shop and Star Market, which put \$2 million into promoting a Massachusetts ballot initiative this fall to loosen restrictions on wine sales. Wal-Mart, Costco, Target, and other big-box stores are in favor of similar initiatives in other states.

Opponents of the Massachusetts initiative (whose outcome, as of this writing, was to be settled on the November ballot) sounded like Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man* with his warning to parents: “Medicinal wine from a teaspoon—then beer from a bottle!” Easier access to wine, they warned, would lead to underage and binge drinking and more car crashes, cirrhosis, and even gonorrhea. Stores selling alcohol would unravel the social fabric of entire neighborhoods. Supermarkets and convenience stores would have little incentive to enforce age limits at the cash register (and just think of self-checkout lines!).

Of course, supermarkets and big-box stores have two powerful arguments in support of easing licensing restrictions: price and, especially for supermarkets, convenience. Supermarkets say that loosening the old, post-Prohibition laws—which usually

for the fourth year in a row. New York State, with more-restrictive rules than Massachusetts to begin with (just one license per owner), has also repeatedly voted against wider access. Who could oppose convenience? Voters who fear wider availability of alcohol, “dry” towns (Massachusetts has fourteen) that would have to choose whether or not to prohibit wine sales if the initiative passed; and candidates, who usually want to keep away from the argument. State governments also worry that enforcing age limits on buying alcohol may cost money, and that state alcohol-related accidents and crimes may increase.



Tired of “dumpy, dirty liquor stores,” Carri Wroblewski and Klaudia Mally have made BRIX, in Boston’s South End, into a “smart” wineshop, with regular tastings and eclectic offerings

allowed distributors to keep a hold on liquor profits—would mean both price breaks and huge savings of time for consumers. Why should a busy mother have to make an extra stop at the package store on her way home from buying groceries just to enjoy a bottle of wine with dinner?

Similar initiatives in other states have repeatedly been defeated. In 2004, the Minnesota legislature voted down wider supermarket sales of wine

Mom-and-pop wineshops stand to lose the most from an easing of licensing. Even if post-Prohibition laws kept profits in the hands of distributors and states, they also allowed independent wine merchants to flourish. Odd as it might seem to wine connoisseurs, the era of the package store might soon seem a lost golden age.

Independent wineshops now feel menaced by two Goliaths: not only the supermarkets, with their relentless

ballot campaigns, but also the Internet. A Supreme Court decision in May of 2005 allowed wineries and Internet businesses to ship wine direct to buyers in many states—something that was previously prohibited almost everywhere (and still is in more than a dozen states). The heavy tread of these twin Goliaths brings up the question: If the patchwork of protectionist wine-sale laws is torn away, will independent wineshops be able to escape the fate of independent bookshops?

FIVE CALIFORNIA WINES FROM WALLY'S

Small wine stores try to sell wines you can't get anywhere else, or at least not at better prices. Here are five well-priced ones from Wally's, in Los Angeles. Wally's ships to states that allow it: www.wallywine.com.

2004 T. Solomon Wellborn Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara County, \$19.99. A small-production bargain, made from declassified grapes—the still-very-good seconds of the wine world—that would cost more than twice as much if made with classified ones.

2005 Chaparral Chardonnay, Santa Barbara County, \$12.99. A typically oaky, fruity, big-bodied wine bottled for the store by Au Bon Climat, at half the price it would fetch under the maker's label.

2004 Cycles Gladiator Syrah, Central Coast, \$9.99. Midstate red wines are strongly fruity ("jammy"), like this first-place winner from the L.A. County Fair (a big event in the California wine world).

2005 Orin Swift's "The Prisoner," Napa Valley, \$27.99. A young wine from a young winemaker, David Phinney, who blends Cabernet, Syrah, and Petite Syrah into a Zinfandel base, with a small percentage of Charbono, a grape identical to the French Corbeau that has a tiny U.S. production.

2003 Hill Family Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, \$39.99. A limited-quantity wine from Doug Hill, a winemaker experienced with famous wineries including Stags Leap and Duckhorn, now working for himself—and thus selling his wine for less than comparable big Napa Cabs.

"Convenience isn't always best or cheapest," Tom Schmeisser, the buyer at Marty's, a large and well-established wine and gourmet store with two locations in the Boston area, told me recently. "Corporate [buyers for chains] won't say, 'I think we should get a nice little Aglianico this week.'" He predicts that chains will stock mostly their own private-label brands, as is the trend at Trader Joe's; Costco already sells private-label Kirkland Signature wines. "It's the dumbing down of wine," Schmeisser says.

Wineshop owners can not only tell you what Aglianico tastes like (it's an astringent but pleasant red wine from southern Italy), they can also pour you a sample. They can tell you what to serve it with—and give you a recipe. Patrick Watson, a former sommelier and waiter at the New York City restaurant Lupa (my favorite of the mostly Italian empire run by Mario Batali and Joseph Bastianich), employs recent French Culinary Institute graduates at Smith & Vine, the small Brooklyn wineshop he runs with his wife, Michele Pravda. (When they

Wine Spectator, and their imitators. But promoting some stranger's taste can be fatal. "Many years ago a lot of retailers gave away their right to a loyal clientele when they started to sell based on scores," Neal Rosenthal, a wine importer and former merchant, told me. A wine seller who takes this route gives over his most valuable assets: his palate, his experience, and his skills at persuasion. He also buys into the idea of wine as a commodity to be price-shopped on the Internet or at a big-box store.

Independent wine sellers traditionally train themselves by traveling, so that they can tell customers romantic stories about the land, the local cuisine, and the proudly traditional or brilliantly innovative winemakers. They go to huge tastings sponsored by big importers, and to trade shows in winemaking countries. They meet winemakers who are passing through town. If they can afford it, they go to California, Europe, and (now) South America and South Africa, to establish exclusive relationships with small-scale winemakers.

Wineshop owners can not only tell you what Aglianico tastes like, they can also pour you a sample. They can tell you what to serve it with—and give you a recipe.

met, at Lupa, he was training as an opera singer, and she was playing in a rock band.) "If you come in and say you need something to go with chicken, we'll ask you what you're putting with it," he told me. Like other owners, Watson requires his staff members to taste practically every wine they sell, and to teach customers how to taste them. Small wine stores offer frequent tastings (especially on weekends), which are the equivalent of mini wine courses.

Luckily for independent merchants, wine is still confusing and intimidating. One solution the chains have applied to this problem is to put customers at ease by stocking brands of generic wine (like Yellow Tail, with its cheery yellow logo) that people have come to trust thanks to the advertising that big wineries can afford. Another is to rely on scores and ratings from Robert Parker,

Any edge will become more important if all the buying power goes to chains. Small shops fear that they will lose the chance to order highly rated small-production wines once distributors promise their entire allotment to chains, their best customers. And distributors stand to suffer too. Many will eventually be forced out of business, as chains form their own distribution arms and buy from themselves. As for wineries, they will have to produce what most chains want: crowd-pleasing wines, the ones with all the knobs and knots sanded off.

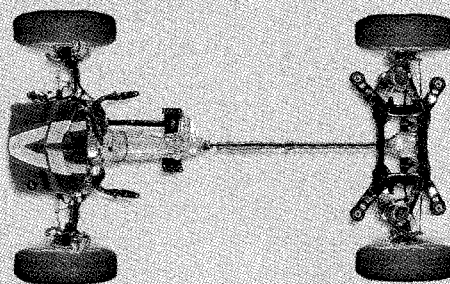
Small stores come up with gimmicks to keep people coming in to try unusual wines. Smith & Vine has a \$10-and-under table, just behind the store's door, a gathering place that has proved extremely popular, with a constantly changing selection of twenty

reds and twenty whites—the fruit, Patrick Watson says, of the staff's tasting thousands of wines a year. BRIX, a stylish wineshop in the newly fashionable South End neighborhood of Boston, has created a devoted local following with frequent tastings, attentive service, and the "BRIX Six," a six-pack of assorted wines with a changing theme ("French Favorites," "Picnic Picks") priced at \$75. It's a good way to keep stock moving, and it makes an entertaining package. Carri Wroblewski, the shop's co-owner, had been in the wine business as both a supplier and a retailer, but decided to open a "smart" neighborhood shop in partnership with Klaudia Mally, a former customer, because they "were tired of going into dumpy, dirty liquor stores with nobody there to offer you guidance and help"—the downside of protectionist laws.

Wally's, in Los Angeles, is an example of extreme service. It thrives despite small premises, and in a state that is every Massachusetts merchant's nightmare: for decades wine has been sold in every California supermarket and convenience store, and even in gas-station snack shops featuring "fine wine." For years, the state regulated prices. Steve Wallace told me that when the "fair trade" system—which predictably protected distributors more than merchants—ended, in the mid-1970s, he thought the business he had started with his family would be finished. Instead, he faced down the country's most freewheeling wine market. He now travels up and down California and across Europe, creating exclusive bottling and selling arrangements with winemakers; goes into customers' wine cellars to diagnose their collections; and supplies and serves wines at several parties a night. He'll even deliver a single bottle to a customer's house on an hour's notice. He knows the tastes of major figures in the wine and entertainment industries, so he can offer them instant advice and tell nervous hosts what, say, Steven Spielberg likes to drink. "I make everyone a genius," he says.

Unfettered alcohol sales in supermarkets and big-box stores would almost certainly lead to a great narrowing of the kinds of wines on offer—as happened long ago in southern states

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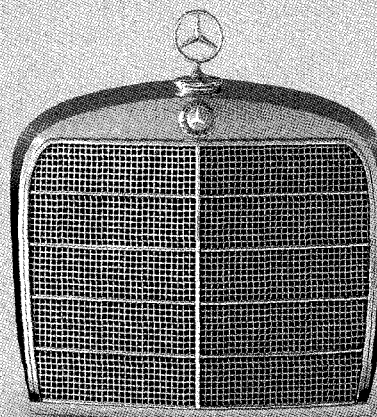
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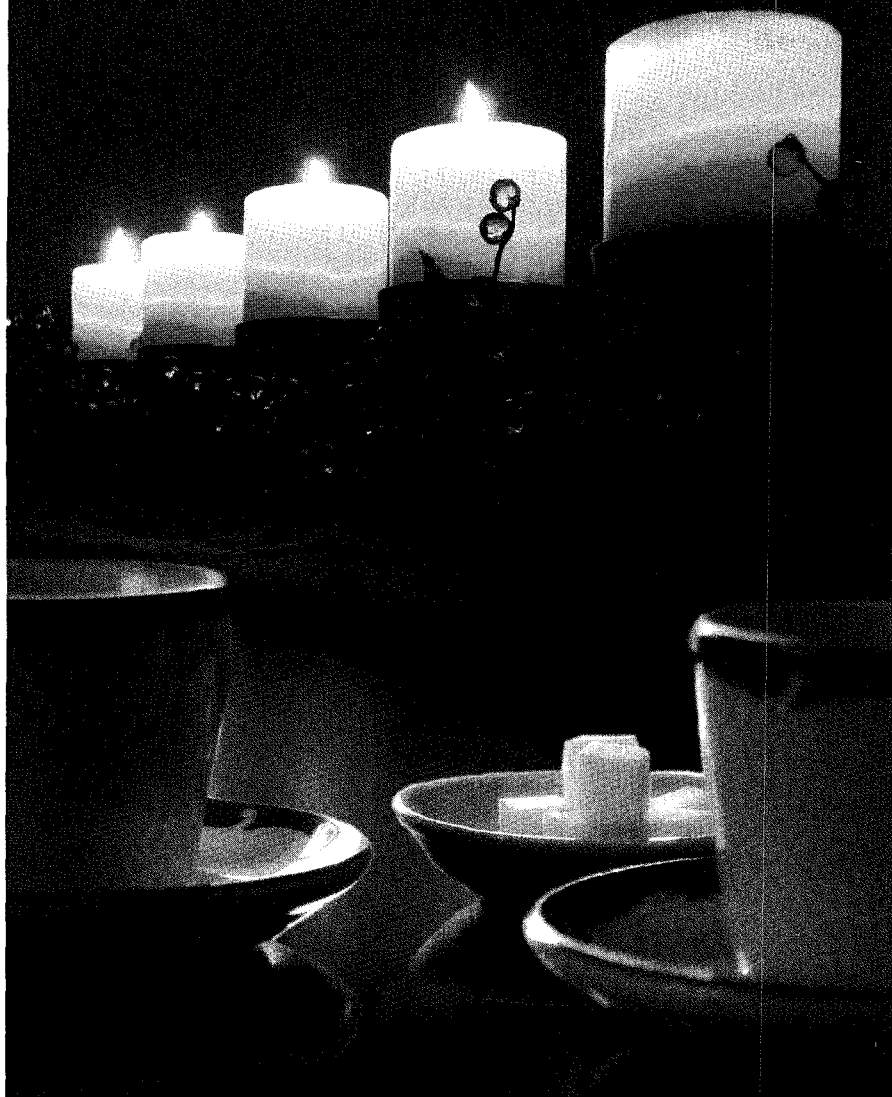
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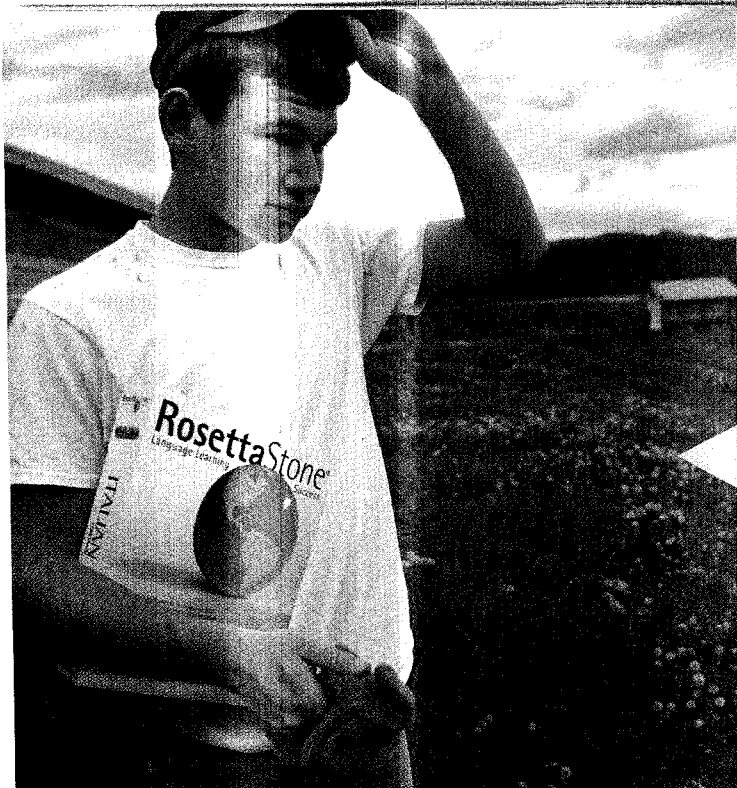
that deregulated wine sales. The buying patterns of the big chains and price clubs that sell wine have already begun to affect how wineries market their wares. This isn't good for people who long to buy that simple but great Sangiovese they found in Umbria—or for people who are curious about wine but uncertain of their tastes.

If interstate shipment of wine becomes virtually unregulated, the Internet could do to wineshops what it has already done to bookstores and record shops. The small-business owners I spoke with are hedging their bets. Watson and Pravda have opened a cheese shop, Stinky Bklyn, across the street from Smith & Vine. Marty's, in Boston, has improved its line of cheeses and sandwiches, and hopes that a change in Massachusetts law will let it ship to other states. Wally's fastest-growing department is Internet sales.

You can't taste wine over the Internet, of course, and it's often a lot harder to know what you might like to drink than what you might like to read. But my friend Pam Hunter, who has long done public relations for Napa Valley wineries, told me she thinks that wineshops might lose even this advantage, as young buyers form their tastes by reading blogs and chat boards operated by Internet wine clubs, which will apply ever-more-sophisticated tracking patterns to "suggest" different wines to their buyers. After years of buying and learning from wineshop friends, Hunter says, she fears that she herself will drift to the keyboard.

I won't. My wine taste is still in formation, and I'd rather taste a wine before I commit to buying a bottle, not to mention support ambitious independent businesses whenever I can. But I also know that I'm lazy. If I see a wine whose label I recognize as something decent in the same place I'm buying my groceries, I'm likely to postpone that trip to the interesting independent wineshop whose owners I like and trust so much. Maybe for a couple of months, maybe forever. For now, at least in many states, antiquated laws have protected independent wine sellers from a fate worse than Amazon. I hope they do for a long time. ▀

Corby Kummer is an Atlantic senior editor.



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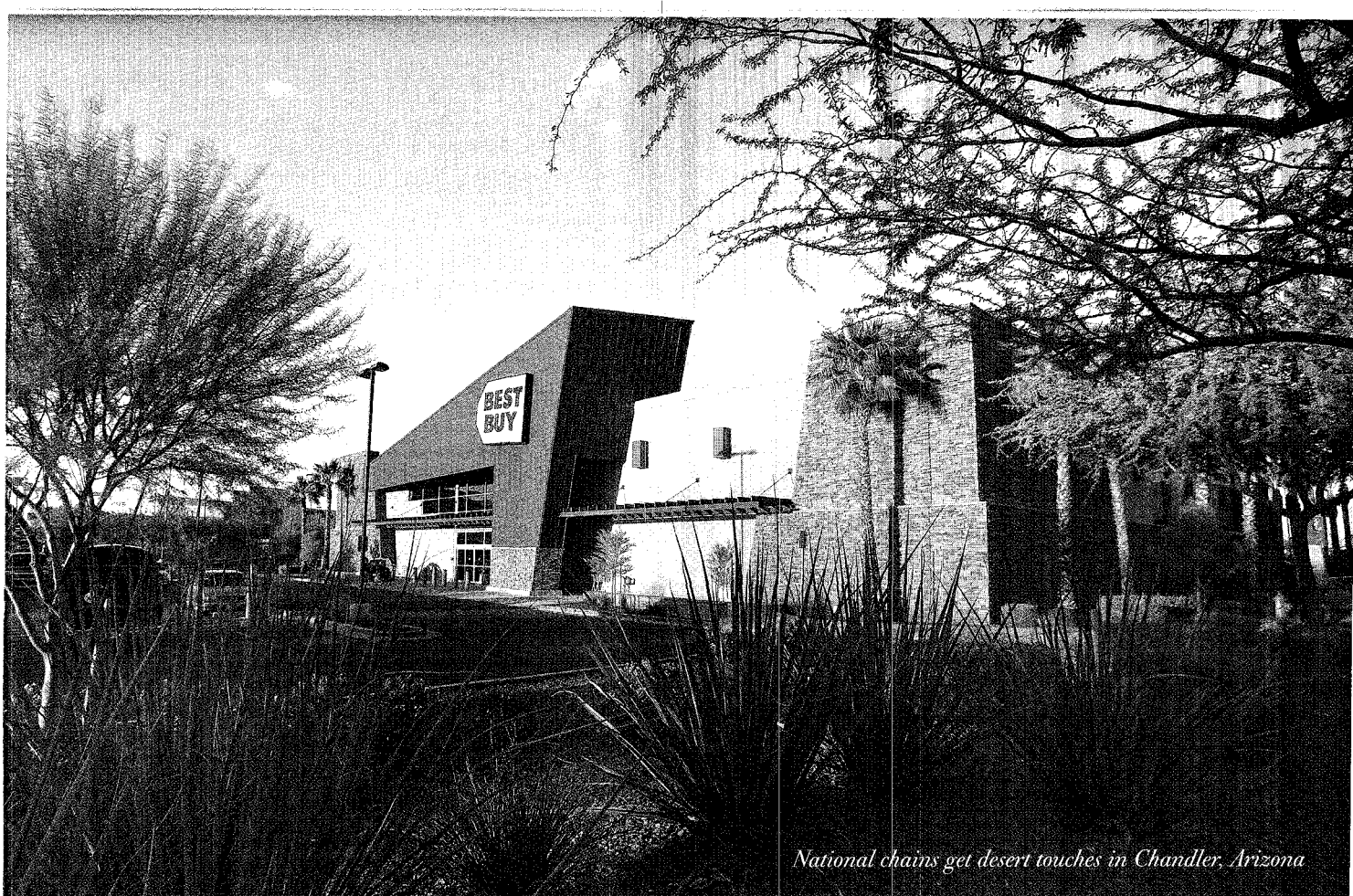
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National chains get desert touches in Chandler, Arizona

CULTURE AND COMMERCE

In Praise of Chain Stores

They aren't destroying local flavor—they're providing variety and comfort

BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

Every well-traveled cosmopolite knows that America is mind-numbingly monotonous—"the most boring country to tour, because everywhere looks like everywhere else," as the columnist Thomas Friedman once told Charlie Rose. Boston has the same stores as Denver, which has the same stores as Charlotte or Seattle or Chicago. We live in a "Stepford world," says Rachel Dresbeck, the author of *Insiders' Guide to Portland, Oregon*. Even Boston's historic Faneuil Hall, she complains, is "dominated by the Gap, Anthropologie, Starbucks, and all the other usual suspects. Why go anywhere? Every place looks the same." This complaint is more than the old worry, dating back to the 1920s, that the big guys are putting Mom and Pop out of business. Today's

critics focus less on what isn't there—Mom and Pop—than on what is. Faneuil Hall actually has plenty of locally owned businesses, from the Geoclassics store selling minerals and jewelry, to Pizzeria Regina ("since 1926"). But you do find the same chains everywhere.

The suburbs are the worst. Take Chandler, Arizona, just south of Phoenix. At Chandler Fashion Center, the area's big shopping mall, you'll find P. F. Chang's, California Pizza Kitchen, Chipotle Mexican Grill, and the Cheesecake Factory. Drive along Chandler's straight, flat boulevards, and you'll see Bed Bath & Beyond and Linens-n-Things; Barnes & Noble and Borders; PetSmart and Petco; Circuit City and Best Buy; Lowe's and Home Depot; CVS and Walgreens. Chandler has the Apple Store and

Pottery Barn, the Gap and Ann Taylor, Banana Republic and DSW, and, of course, Target and Wal-Mart, Starbucks and McDonald's. For people allergic to brands, Chandler must be hell—even without the 110-degree days.

One of the fastest-growing cities in the country, Chandler is definitely the kind of place urbanists have in mind as they intone, "When every place looks the same, there is no such thing as place anymore." Like so many towns in America, it has lost much of its historic character as a farming community. The annual Ostrich Festival still honors one traditional product, but these days Chandler raises more subdivisions and strip malls than ostrich plumes or cotton, another former staple. Yet it still refutes the common assertion that national chains are a blight on the landscape, that they've turned American towns into an indistinguishable "geography of nowhere."

The first thing you notice in Chandler is that, as a broad empirical claim, the cliché that "everywhere looks like everywhere else" is obvious nonsense. Chandler's land and air and foliage are peculiar to the desert Southwest.

JEFF TOPPING

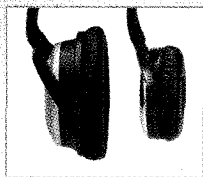
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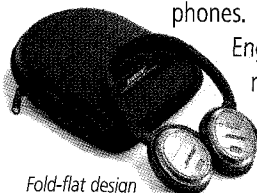


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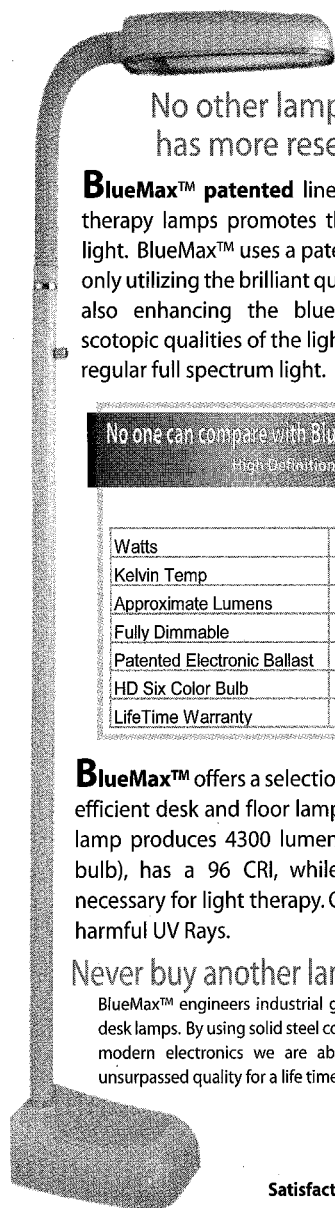
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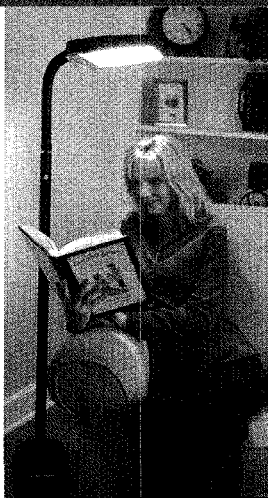
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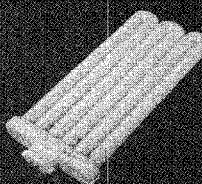
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The people dress differently. Even the cookie-cutter housing developments, with their xeriscaping and washed-out desert palette, remind you where you are. Forget New England clapboard, Carolina columns, or yellow Texas brick. In the intense sun of Chandler, the red-tile roofs common in California turn a pale, pale pink.

Stores don't give places their character. Terrain and weather and culture do. Familiar retailers may take some of the discovery out of travel—to the consternation of journalists looking for obvious local color—but by holding some of the commercial background constant, chains make it easier to discern the real differences that define a place: the way, for instance, that people in Chandler come out to enjoy the summer twilight, when the sky glows purple and the dry air cools.

Besides, the idea that America was once filled with wildly varied business establishments is largely a myth. Big cities could, and still can, support more retail niches than small towns. And in a less competitive national market, there was certainly more variation in business efficiency—in prices, service, and merchandise quality. But the range of retailing *ideas* in any given town was rarely that great. One deli or diner or lunch counter or cafeteria was pretty much like every other one. A hardware store was a hardware store, a pharmacy a pharmacy. Before it became a ubiquitous part of urban life, Starbucks was, in most American cities, a radically new idea.

Chains do more than bargain down prices from suppliers or divide fixed costs across a lot of units. They rapidly spread economic discovery—the scarce and costly knowledge of what retail concepts and operational innovations actually work. That knowledge can be gained only through the expensive and time-consuming process of trial and error. Expecting each town to independently invent every new business is a prescription for real monotony, at least for the locals. Chains make a large range of choices available in more places. They increase local variety, even as they reduce the differences from place to place. People who mostly stay put get to have experiences once available only to

frequent travelers, and this loss of exclusivity is one reason why frequent travelers are the ones who complain. When Borders was a unique Ann Arbor institution, people in places like Chandler—or, for that matter, Philadelphia and Los Angeles—didn't have much in the way of bookstores. Back in 1986, when California Pizza Kitchen was an innovative local restaurant about to open its second location, food writers at the L.A. *Daily News* declared it “the kind of place every neighborhood should have.” So what's wrong if the country has 158 neighborhood CPKs instead of one or two?

The process of multiplication is particularly important for fast-growing towns like Chandler, where rollouts of established stores allow retail variety to expand as fast as the growing population can support new businesses. I heard the same refrain in Chandler that I've heard in similar boomburbs elsewhere, and for similar reasons. “It's got all the advantages of a small town, in terms of being friendly, but it's got all the things of a big town,” says Scott Stephens, who moved from Manhattan Beach, California, in 1998 to work for Motorola. Chains let people in a city of 250,000 enjoy retail amenities once available only in a huge metropolitan center. At the same time, familiar establishments make it easier for people to make a home in a new place. When Nissan recently moved its headquarters from Southern California to Tennessee, an unusually high percentage of its Los Angeles-area employees accepted the transfer. “The fact that Starbucks are everywhere helps make moving a lot easier these days,” a rueful Greg Whitney, vice president of business development for the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, told the *Los Angeles Times* reporter John O'Dell. Orth Hedrick, a Nissan product manager, decided he could stay with the job he loved when he turned off the interstate near Nashville and realized, “You could really be Anywhere, U.S.A. There's a great big regional shopping mall, and most of the stores and restaurants are the same ones we see in California. Yet a few miles away you're in downtown, and there's lots of local color, too.”

Contrary to the rhetoric of bored cosmopolites, most cities don't exist

primarily to please tourists. The children toddling through the Chandler mall hugging their soft Build-A-Bear animals are no less delighted because kids can also build a bear in Memphis or St. Louis. For them, this isn't tourism; it's life—the experiences that create the memories from which the meaning of a place arises over time. Among Chandler's most charming sights are the business-casual dads joining their wives and kids for lunch in the mall food court. The food isn't the point, let alone whether it's from Subway or Dairy Queen. The restaurants merely provide the props and setting for the family time. When those kids grow up, they'll remember the food court as happily as an older generation recalls the diners and motels of Route 66—not because of the businesses' innate appeal but because of the memories they evoke.

The contempt for chains represents a brand-obsessed view of place, as if store names were all that mattered to a city's character. For many critics, the name on the store really *is* all that matters. The planning consultant Robert Gibbs works with cities that want to revive their downtowns, and he also helps developers find space for retailers. To his frustration, he finds that many cities actually turn away national chains, preferring a moribund downtown that seems authentically local. But, he says, the same local activists who oppose chains “want specialty retail that sells exactly what the chains sell—the same price, the same fit, the same qualities, the same sizes, the same brands, even.” You can show people pictures of a Pottery Barn with nothing but the name changed, he says, and they'll love the store. So downtown stores stay empty, or sell low-value tourist items like candles and kites, while the chains open on the edge of town. In the name of urbanism, officials and activists in cities like Ann Arbor and Fort Collins, Colorado, are driving business to the suburbs. “If people like shopping at the Banana Republic or the Gap, if that's your market—or Payless Shoes—why not?” says an exasperated Gibbs. “Why not sell the goods and services people want?” ■

Virginia Postrel is an Atlantic contributing editor and the author of The Substance of Style and The Future and Its Enemies. Her blog, the Dynamist, can be found at www.dynamist.com/weblog.

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TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft Reboots

A preview of the new versions of Windows and Office

BY JAMES FALLOWS

Microsoft is the United States of the computer world. Everyone relies on it, and everyone resents it. OK, this may be an overstatement in each case. But there is more than a joke similarity between Microsoft's and America's burdens. Each enjoys the benefits of its dominance but also has assumed the thankless job of maintaining a complex international order. No one loves a hegemon.

In a few weeks Microsoft is scheduled to release new versions of the two products that are the basis of its superpower role. These are its Windows operating system, whose upcoming version was known as "Longhorn" through its many years of development and will go on sale as Windows Vista; and the Office "suite" of programs, including such stalwarts as Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Excel. Windows and Office are what make Microsoft so profitable—they are believed in the industry to account for most of the company's roughly \$12 billion in profit—but they are also what have made its product-development cycles so drawn-out and ponderous. Google, eBay, or Yahoo can tinker with their internal code, or float new programs on an experimental basis, and no one else's software breaks as a result. But tens of thousands of hardware and software companies design their products to match Microsoft's announced standards, and hundreds of millions of users assume that the programs will work on any oddly configured computer in any corner of the world. Microsoft cannot do anything by surprise—or very fast.

The team in charge of Office turns out a new version of its programs every three years or so. (Disclosure: in 1999 I worked on the team preparing "Office 10," as it was known inside the company. The current standard, Office 2003, was known internally as "Office

11," and the forthcoming Office 2007 is "Office 12.") At least half of each product cycle, eighteen months of the three years, is given to testing the software and looking for bugs.

The effort to design Longhorn/Vista has been so vast, complex, and frequently delayed that it has gone on for half as long as Google has existed as a company; it will probably be the last version of Windows to be released as one comprehensive offering. From now on, Microsoft is expected to release smaller, more targeted upgrades for specific markets.

Of Microsoft's two new products, Vista and Office, Vista is by far the more important, but oddly it presents users with a less interesting set of choices. Vista is important for Microsoft as a source of new revenue, and it is important to the entire technology industry in the same way. The debut of a new operating system usually leads to a surge in PC sales, as people who have been waiting to upgrade buy machines

with the new software installed. Since each version of Windows has required more memory, faster processing chips, and better video displays to show off its new features, component makers like Intel and AMD prosper when Microsoft puts a new Windows on sale.

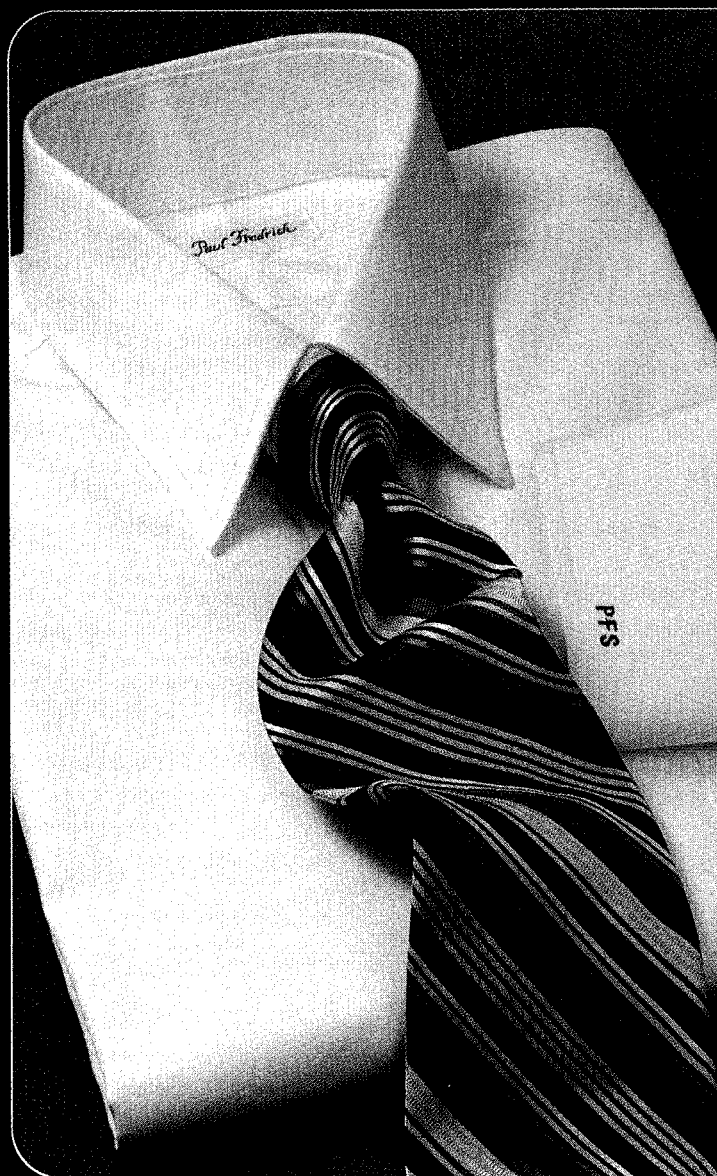
But ordinary PC users don't have to spend much time thinking about Windows: when you buy a new computer, *of course* you should get one with Windows Vista installed. And until you buy a new computer, it's not worth the time and cost to upgrade. You should get Vista the next time you buy a new PC, because it will already be installed, tweaked, and configured—a job in itself. Also, the minute a new operating system appears, its predecessors start becoming obsolete, so there's no sense in looking for minor savings by buying computers preloaded with software (like today's otherwise admirable Windows XP) on which the clock is ticking.

But you shouldn't (in most cases) upgrade until you get that computer, because your current system probably



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can't show off what the new Windows does best. The problem with upgrading is not so much the difficulty of the process. With great nervousness born of past botched upgrades, I put a CD containing the Vista upgrade code into one of my machines—and it worked! After an hour or so of churning and processing, my desktop showed all the same programs and all the same settings, only with a different operating system underneath. But because that computer is two and a half years old, Vista's most advanced and interesting features simply could not run on it. (Vista installs in an intelligent, modular fashion, adding as many components as a particular PC can handle.)

Ninety percent of the sex appeal of Vista is its new "Aero" desktop theme. This offers convenient icon-size gadgets on the desktop—a clock, a calendar—like those of a Mac. Its overall look is far sleeker than any previous Windows incarnation and, gasp, seems even more modern than the Mac. One example: when you have a large number of programs running, it can be hard to remember which is which. But if you run your mouse along tabs at the bottom of the Vista screen, a thumbnail version of each window comes up, as if you're riffling through a pack of cards, and lets you quickly find what you're looking for.

Or so I understand from online demos; the graphics card in my Thinkpad T41 can't run Aero. (If you do buy a computer before Vista-equipped ones are available early next year, make sure it says "Vista compatible," and ask about Aero.) The version of Vista my computer will accept has a number of stolid, sensible changes under the hood. The "Start" menu is far better organized and makes finding and launching the right program much easier. There are several utilities that help you keep track of files you are synchronizing between desktop and laptop computers. The most important operating change is a new indexed search system, which allows quick retrieval of information from e-mail and almost any kind of file. There are countless other engineering improvements. Two drawbacks: Vista doesn't seem overall any faster than XP, and the version I used came with a security system I quickly came to hate. It is so protected

against "malware" and viruses that routine tasks become chores. I'm told that later releases are much less overaggressive on the security front.

Office 2007 is a different matter. Most people will probably wait to get new computers before buying this upgrade, but anyone who likes "interesting" and elegant software should consider getting it sooner.

Many of the changes in Word, Outlook, Excel, and the rest are strictly visual—but if you think that's a minor factor, you haven't paid attention to the Mac. Each of the programs simply looks better than before—nicer typefaces, better colors, a much less clunky effect overall. As opposed to the familiar drop-down menus, like Format/Paragraph/Line Spacing, the programs present a "ribbon" across the top of the screen, with commands likely to apply to the work you are doing. Efforts to outguess the user have often been embarrassing in the past—think of "It looks like you're writing a letter"—but the ribbon's choices seem sensible. Better still, Microsoft has taken pains not to irritate anybody who likes the way the programs work now. I am a pro-keyboard, anti-mouse guy, and the new Word is designed to recognize all the keystroke combinations I have used for years to change formatting or open a file. The new programs store documents in a completely new XML-based format, which takes about half as much space as existing .doc or .ppt files and has other technical advantages. To avoid transition glitches, Office 2007 programs will be able to store files in either old or new formats, and Microsoft will post free converters on its Web site, so that older Office programs can open files in the new format. The new programs can also save files directly as PDFs.

Two touches in Word that writers will appreciate: a well-designed word-count utility, which keeps a visible running tally of your overall document length or a selected portion of it, and an improved system for side-by-side comparisons of different versions of a document.

OneNote, Microsoft's new, Mac-like data-management system, has been

improved in several ways. For instance, it has a built-in OCR (for "optical character recognition") system that interprets the text in photos, graphics files, handwriting from a tablet computer, or even words from audio and video files, and then lets you find that text with a fast indexed search. It has been connected with the other Office programs in a very useful way. For example, you can with a keystroke "print" a Word document, an Excel spreadsheet, an e-mail, or any Web page (including from Firefox) directly into OneNote, where it is stored. For me, this has made OneNote an easy one-step repository for information I want to look at and deal with later.

Outlook has also been significantly improved. But as OneNote has become Microsoft's all-purpose destination for reference data, Outlook is improving as a central site for "action" items. The new version makes it easier to take incoming e-mails and convert them to their actionable essence. This one saying "See you for lunch on Tues" should really be on your calendar, and that one saying "Get this report done by Tuesday or else!" should really be a task—with a deadline. The indexed search utility also makes Outlook more convenient to use. It includes a system for color-coding messages or tasks based on categories—red ones to be dealt with today, green ones to worry about next week, whatever else the user wants. An improved daily-calendar display goes a long way toward giving a unified view of the appointments, deadlines, and other obligations you have in the current day and the days ahead. Anyone who travels internationally knows the bizarre and annoying way in which Outlook has until now handled time-zone shifts. If you list an all-day event—"Dad's Birthday"—while you are in Chicago, when you get to Frankfurt it will be converted to an appointment stretching from, say, 5 a.m. one day to 5 a.m. the next, Frankfurt time. This bug has at last been fixed.

There is more to say, but here's what you need to know for now: when you're buying a computer, get one with Vista, and before then, give the new Office a thought. ▀

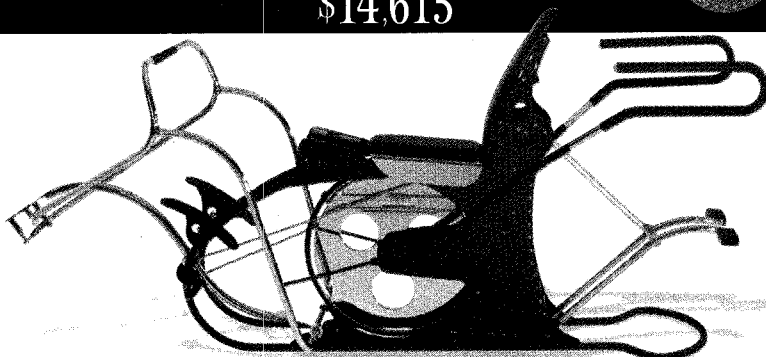
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CONTENT

Get Me Rewrite!

A modest proposal for reinventing newspapers for the digital age

BY MICHAEL HIRSCHORN

If the twenty-first-century news business has a Zapruder film, it's an eight-minute Flash-based movie called *EPIC 2014*. For reasons that will soon become obvious, it has not received a lot of attention in the mainstream media (MSM in "Web-ese"), but has propagated quietly among news geeks since it was released online in late 2004. I first saw it last year at a "Whither the News" klatch at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York, where glum top editors from the major dailies and news networks gathered with sallow, unmistakably smug representatives of the digital world.

EPIC, which is composed almost entirely of simple text, graphics, and narration, launched the proceedings, and I think it would be fair to say that it rocked the world of the MSM mandarins. This was because, speaking

from the prospective perch of 2014, it mapped out in calm detail exactly how the MSM would meet its doom. Eighteen months, and hundreds of millenarian prophecies later, *EPIC 2014* (and its updated version, *EPIC 2015*, released in 2005) already seems quaint, even a bit absurd. And its camp retro-futurism (Toffler by way of Epcot) is much funnier now that I'm watching it on my computer and not with ashen-faced news execs. The movie, ostensibly a product of the fictional Museum of Media History, begins:

In the year 2014, people have access to a breadth and depth of information unimaginable in an earlier age. Everyone contributes in some way. Everyone participates to create a living, breathing mediascape. However, the press, as you know it, has

ceased to exist. The Fourth Estate's fortunes have waned. Twentieth-century news organizations are an afterthought, a lonely remnant of a not-too-distant past.

In 2008, we learn, Amazon and Google merged to form Googlezon, which allowed this most excellently named new conglomerate to use its "detailed knowledge of every user's social network, demographics, consumption habits, and interests to provide total customization of content and advertising." Six years later, Googlezon has launched the ultimate killer app: EPIC, or "Evolving Personalized Information Construct," a "system by which our sprawling, chaotic mediascape is filtered, ordered, and delivered." Under EPIC, anyone can create news, the users subscribe to independent editors based on their interests, and everyone is paid from the billions in advertising Googlezon sells across this vast mediaverse. The film ends with an Orwellian prediction—"EPIC is what we wanted, it is what we chose, and its commercial success preempted any discussions of media and democracy or journalistic ethics"—and a joke:

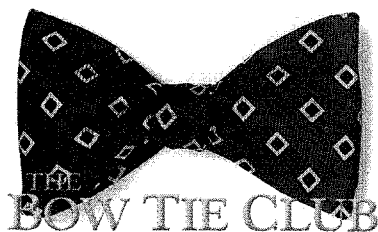
Today in 2014, *The New York Times* has gone offline, in feeble protest to Googlezon's hegemony. *The Times* has become a print-only newsletter for the elite and the elderly.

As a piece of pop futurism, *EPIC 2014* is both brilliant and brilliantly self-subverting (at once inevitable and preposterous). But what's remarkable is how many of its ten-years-out predictions have already come true—if not materially, then de facto: the mass migration of everything to the Web, the explosion of blogging, the near-instant embrace of social media (see YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Wikipedia), the growing sophistication of Google's AdWords and AdSense (the latter soon to be extended to user-customized RSS file format and other feeds), the TiVo-ization of television, and on and on. Instead of buying Amazon, Google bought YouTube, an Evolving Personalized Information Construct that didn't exist in 2004—GoogleTube instead of Googlezon. Thus does two-year-old futurism already seem hopelessly *recherché*.

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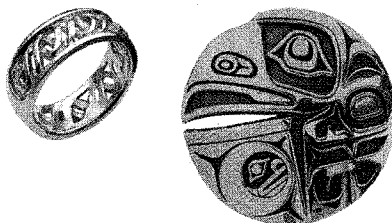


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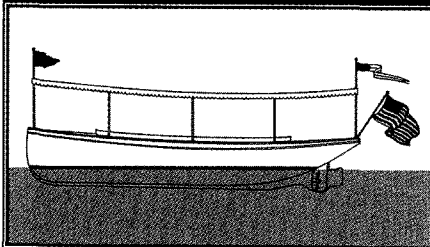
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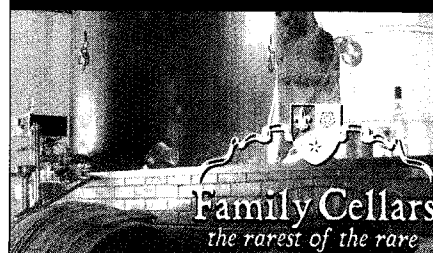
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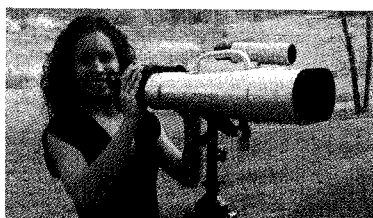
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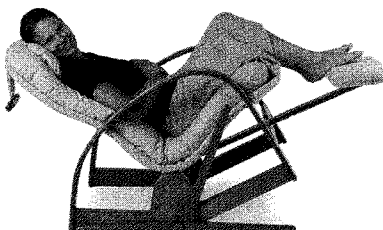
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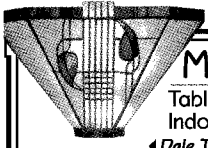
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SRI LANKA • TAIWAN

The Times Company hasn't thrown in the towel, but it is inarguably *in extremis*. It plans to cut more than 1,000 jobs in the next two years, and its profits continue to fall along with its stock price; only the most purblind of optimists could deny that this is a harbinger of further miseries. A study released last spring by the Audit Bureau of Circulations showed that daily newspaper circulation had dropped about 2.5 percent over the previous year, while Sunday circulation dropped 3.1 percent. More worrisome, the Project for Excellence in Journalism noted in its annual report on newspaper audiences, this slide is both persistent and accelerating:

In 2004, the newspaper circulation losses that had been building slowly over 15 years began to accelerate. In 2005 things got roughly three times worse.

This would seem like the moment to get on my high horse and defend the daily newspaper, with its omnibus approach to everything from your town to the world, its high/low pastiche, its editorial ordering function that allows readers to weigh and sort multitudinous news inputs into a coherent worldview. But this is what I would call, to borrow a Wall Street term, *sell-side* logic. It flatters the people who have a vested interest in preserving the gatekeeper function and the economic margins provided by dead-tree media, or who see newspapers as a cultural bulwark against the barbarians. The barbarians, on the other hand, don't seem to care; they'd rather get the news they want, not the news the mandarins say is good for them.

And while it's true that fewer and fewer people are purchasing newspapers, it's also almost certainly true that more and more people are reading *news*. This thanks to portals, newspaper Web sites, search engines, syndication feeds, and millions of blogs—a goodly percentage built on the hard labor of professional journalists, whose work the bloggers link to, praise, mock, and recombine with the hard labor of other professional journalists. Meanwhile, many of these blogs, produced on the cheap, have become profitable businesses that generate virtually no revenue for the journo who

provide the constantly updated fodder. Feasting on the rotting corpse, if you will, while making polite chitchat.

For all the many things blogs do, their most disruptive application has been to provide an alternate portal into news, bypassing, or “disintermediating,” the sorting traditionally done by newspaper editors and TV news producers. Drudge, Huffington, and their tens of thousands of less-popular competitors effectively offer alternate front pages targeted to audiences grouped by similar interests and affections. And because most newspapers (and their dot-coms) have so far been too proud to integrate the work of other publications, the smartest blogs can provide deeper and wider-ranging news experiences than any individual newspaper does. John Vinocur writes a great weekly column for the *International Herald Tribune*, but anyone who cares about Europe can tap hundreds of other sources in a matter of minutes.

Meanwhile, top reporters and columnists at major newspapers are realizing (or will realize soon) that their fates are not necessarily tied to those of their employers. As portals and search engines and blogs increasingly allow readers to consume media without context or much branding, writers like Thomas Friedman will increasingly wonder what is the benefit of working for a newspaper—especially when the newspaper is burying his article behind a subscriber wall. It will require only a slight shift in the economic model for the Friedmans of the world to realize that they don't need the newspapers they work for; that they can go off and blog on their own, or form United Artists—like cooperatives to financially support their independent efforts.

So what should newspapers do? They could stop printing. It may happen eventually, or perhaps newsprint *will* find a financially sustainable market among the elite and elderly (or perhaps it will have a nostalgic vogue not unlike that of, say, heirloom tomatoes), but that's not what I'm getting at. The current Web-publishing model that newspapers are using isn't likely to become financially viable anytime soon. With few exceptions, the media businesses thriving

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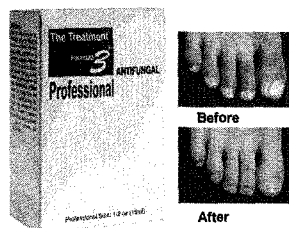
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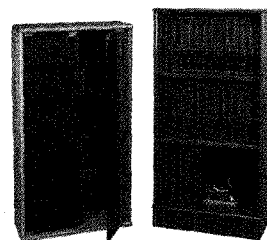
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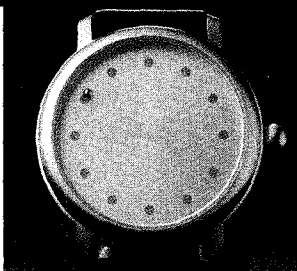
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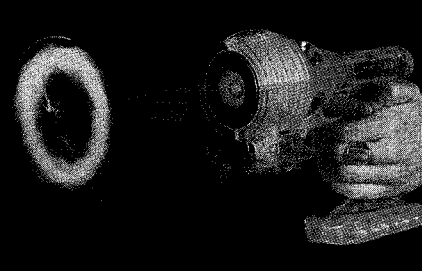
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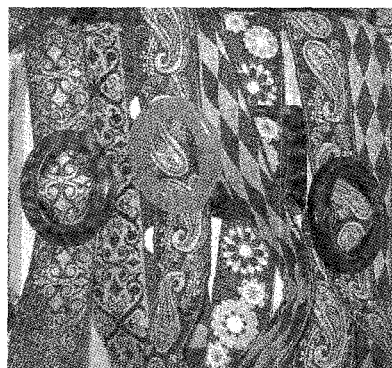


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	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run):	522,230	517,823
b. Paid Circulation (by Mail and Outside Mail)		
1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541:	326,901	330,917
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3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution:	73,493	70,400
4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS:	3	0
c. Total Paid Circulation [(sum of 15b. 1), 2), 3), and 4)]:	400,396	401,317
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (by Mail and Outside Mail):		
1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541:	16,800	14,112
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4) Outside the Mail:	5,021	4,954
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f. Total Distribution (sum of 15c. and e.):	422,217	420,383
g. Copies not Distributed:	100,013	97,440
h. Total (sum of 15f. and g.):	522,230	517,823
i. Percent Paid [(15c. divided by 15f. times 100):	94.83%	95.46%

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on the Web either are low-cost blog-like efforts or follow a many-to-many model, in which communities create, share, and consume content. Publishing an article on the Web gets you one click; getting your users to write the article for you gets you a thousand clicks, and costs less to boot. In other words, turning your users into contributors increases their engagement with your site—each click is, after all, also an “ad impression”—while simultaneously generating more content that you in turn can sell to advertisers.

That, I'd venture, is how you start rethinking the newspaper business. Not only do you allow your reporters to blog; you make them the hubs of their own social networks, the maestros of their own wikis, the masters of their own many-to-many realms. To take but one example, Kelefa Sanneh is the pop-music critic for *The New York Times*. He is very likely the best music critic in the country, and certainly the best new *Times* music writer in years. Let's say that Sanneh creates his own community around the music he likes. Or *The Washington Post's* Dana Priest creates an interactive online universe around her intelligence reportage. With editorial oversight only for libel and factual accuracy, Sanneh or Priest are allowed to do whatever they want on their sites (while their mother ships pour their resources into marketing them). In Sanneh's case, allow other people to write music reviews under the *Times*/Sanneh “brand.” In Priest's case, turn the site into a clearinghouse for global intelligence information, rumors, conspiracy theories, and so forth (obligatory disclaimer: “The views of posters do not necessarily represent those of the Washington Post Company”). Go even further: incentivize the critics and reporters by allowing them to profit based on the popularity of their sites; make it worth their while to stick around.

Gaming this out in the most baldly capitalistic fashion, the papers then stand a chance of transforming one Sanneh review (one impression) into the organic back-and-forth of social media (1,000 impressions). This, in turn, would allow *The Times* (or *The Post*) to start achieving the scale, and the cost efficiency, that make online publishing profitable. In fact, there's a rough model for this emerging

already: it's called About.com, a desperately unglamorous site that features hundreds of freelancers who can tailor their part of the site to the needs and desires of their users. *The Times* bought it last year for \$410 million, and it is currently the company's primary growth area.

Playing this logic out, the next task would be uniting the Sanneh or Priest site to the *Times* or *Post* whole. You could essentially self-syndicate, sending your regular *Times* or *Post* headlines to Sanneh's and Priest's sites, luring readers back to the mother ship while increasing the number of times each story is read. Indeed, the logic could be (and in some circles already is being) played out even further. What if you essentially exploded the central function of the newspaper and "microchunked" (to borrow a current term) the content, syndicating all of it to bloggers or other news sites in return for a share of any advertising revenue each site generates? The Associated Press has made this the centerpiece of its digital-age strategy: it recently signed a potentially breakthrough deal with

Google, in which Google will pay the AP for access to its stories; and the AP has launched a broadband player that Web sites can use to access AP video content. Its content goes where the readers are, and the AP gets paid, no matter what. Remarkably, this most old-school of services is a lone bright spot in the MSM landscape. The AP's revenues have increased from more than \$593 million in 2003 to more than \$654 million in 2005; its digital revenue grew at a rate of 66 percent from 2004 to 2006. Of course, the AP has always been a syndicator, so no conceptual leap of faith (indeed no leap whatsoever) was required to move the business from analog to digital.

The Times, in particular, seems increasingly aware of the gargantuan leap of faith it will need to make to avoid the curse of *EPIC 2014*. If you go to the *Times* site, you can find a button on the top navigation bar for something called "My Times." The paper is promising "a new service that lets you create a personalized page with what you like best in *The New York Times* and your favorite

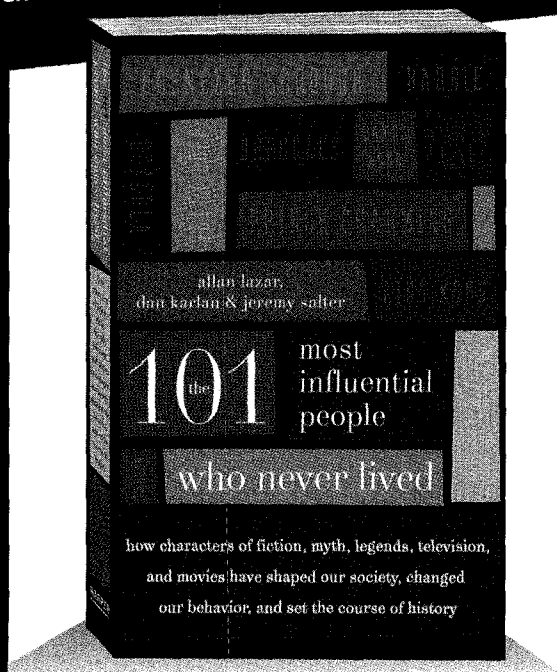
sites and blogs from all over the Web." (If it works, I still intend to take credit.)

So what does this mean for newsprint? Counterintuitively, I'd argue that this disaggregation strategy could provide a renewed logic to the printed product. As news itself becomes more of an instantly available commodity, readers will crave an oasis of coherence and analysis (which is also why books, and magazines like *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker*, are potentially brilliant counterprogramming for ADD'ed info burnouts). Online news, microchunked, consumed on the fly, is fast food; the newspaper, fed by its newly invigorated journalist-brands, is the sit-down meal. In this marginally more optimistic future history, the roles of print and digital are inverted. Original news—in the form of stories, postings, and community—begins online, while print offers an intelligent digest/redaction that readers (and not only the elite and elderly) can peruse at their leisure. You could even call it *Reader's Digest*. ▀

Michael Hirschorn is the executive vice president of original programming and production at VH1.

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She Said What She Thought

Oriana Fallaci (1929–2006)

BY MARK STEYN

“You go fuck yourself,” said Oriana Fallaci to no one in particular, in a recent profile. “I say what I want.”

And she did. Latterly, she said what she wanted about Islam, on which subject most of us feel constrained to be more, ah, circumspect. And what she wanted to say to Islam boiled down pretty much to “Go fuck yourself.” She scorned Muslims for their habits of reproduction, of evacuation, of female genital mutilation. She developed obsessions both arcane—who *really* invented sherbet (the ancient Romans, not the “sons of Allah”)—and unhealthy, if not psychologically then certainly actuarially: What’s the deal with Muhammad’s nine-year-old wife? Who sodomized whom at Mehmet II’s big shindig to mark the fall of Constantinople in 1453? These are areas over which more discreet scholars prefer to draw a veil, if not the full burka. In *The Rage and the Pride* (2002), she dwelt upon the hitherto-neglected topic of micturition among Somali Muslims in Florence’s Cathedral Square, whom she accused of leaving “yellow streaks of urine that profaned the millenary marbles of the Baptistery”: “Good Heavens! They really take long shots, these sons of Allah! How could they succeed in hitting so well that target protected by a balcony and more than two yards distant from their urinary apparatus?”

Rendered in what she called “the oddities of Fallaci’s English,” this is splendidly offensive and gloriously rude. But it is also, as my colleague Christopher Hitchens dismissed Signora Fallaci in these pages, “a sort of primer in how not to write about Islam.” One sees his point. Long before the first Muslim convenience store opened in a British city, the “gents” in every rural pub had a streaked wall over the urinals, boasting unfeasible high-tide marks crayoned on the plaster, at impressive distance from the “urinary apparatus.” A few years back, during a long bus trip for Major

League Baseball owners, the driver was obliged to make a roadside stop for Gene Autry to relieve himself; as the old singing cowboy reboarded, George W. Bush congratulated him on his “great spray.” The “long shots” of the sons of Allah is thus not the firmest ground on which to defend Western civilization.

Nevertheless, and with due respect to Mr. Hitchens, if there is a primer on how to write about Islam, it doesn’t seem to be getting us very far either. Who ya gonna believe? The president’s sappy “religion of peace” speeches or your lyin’ eyes? La Fallaci (as she styled herself) disdained what the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut calls the West’s “penitential narcissism” and, in an age of absurd abasement, found many takers for her bravura rejection thereof. After all, if Muslims are so ready to take offense, you might as well give ‘em some. Why not have some gleeful sport along the road to servitude?

Oriana Fallaci was, on the one hand, an unlikely crusader. Petite physically if in no other sense, she was a feminist, a secularist, a leftist. On the other hand, who has most to lose? At a time when uncovered women are jeered at and intimidated when they walk through certain suburbs of Continental cities, La Fallaci might have expected the other divas to rally to the cause. Instead, such feminist warhorses as Germaine Greer managed to give the impression that they found Islam a bit of a turn-on: here’s the patriarchal society they’ve been pining for all along. As for the secular elites of the West, insofar as there is a theocratic menace, it’s not the Wahhabis but Bush and the evangelicals, with a bit of help from (as Harold Pinter put it) “Tony Blair as a hired Christian thug.” So the lioness in winter roused herself and sallied forth to save post-Christian Europe from itself.

La Fallaci was full of rage and passion. *Passion* is a diminished word these

days, routinely appended by politicians to dreary boilerplate about prescription drugs for seniors or some such. But she was bursting with it. Fiercely beautiful well into her cancer-ravaged old age, she had that careless sensuality that anglophone womanhood can rarely carry off. She didn’t subscribe to the old aphrodisiac-of-power clichés; on the contrary, she often found alpha males one big zzzzzzzzz, and great men had the vague sensation their “apparatus” was withering under her gaze. Castro was smelly, and Arafat was a blowsy old queen—“a massive trunk, huge hips ... red and fleshy lips.”

Still, she regarded an interview as “coitus,” and she didn’t always mean it metaphorically. Two days after interviewing Alekos Panagoulis, a briefly fashionable revolutionary who’d attempted to assassinate the Greek leader Papadopoulos, Fallaci became his lover. When their turbulent relationship ended with his death in a car crash, rumored to have been politically engineered, Fallaci wrote a book—*A Man* (1979)—that few other credible journalists could have gotten away with.

One would have been only mildly surprised had her interview with Ayatollah Khomeini followed the same trajectory. After traveling to Qom and cooling her heels for ten days waiting for him to agree to see her, she was ushered, barefoot and wearing a chador, into his presence—and found what she subsequently described as the most handsome old man she’d ever met. In his own way, Khomeini must have dug the crazy Italian chick. The meeting was terminated when she tore off “this stupid medieval rag” and hurled her chador to the floor, but he agreed to finish the interview a day or two later.

It seems a fantastical encounter now: a man who’d just shoveled every female in what was supposedly the most modernized of Middle Eastern nations back into “medieval rags” versus the archetype of the ball-busting Western career woman. The phrase *personality interviewer* is grossly devalued these days: look at Mike Wallace’s cringe-making oleaginous encounter with today’s Iranian must-get, President Ahmadinejad. Indeed, Wallace seems to have found

even more attractive (“very smart, savvy, self-assured, good-looking in a strange way”) than Fallaci found Khomeini. She was “the greatest political interviewer of modern times” (*Rolling Stone*), and yet, unlike so many of the bland big shots jetting from foreign ministry to presidential palace, she gravitated to power mainly for the opportunities it afforded to kneel in the crotch. She asked the ayatollah indignant questions about the executions of prostitutes and homosexuals, and he sneered at women like her for going around uncovered, “dragging behind them a tail of men.” It wasn’t all rage and passion; she did brusque and offhand pretty lethally, too: “Don’t you find,” she asked Henry Kissinger during Vietnam, fighting vainly the old ennui, “that it’s been a useless war?” “On this, I can agree,” he said.

Her interviews and war reporting made her a wealthy woman, with homes in Florence, the Tuscan countryside, and Manhattan. Not bad for a girl from a working-class family—a child of anti-Mussolini partisans—who turned to journalism at sixteen as a means of paying her way at medical school. By the time her cancer was diagnosed in the mid-1990s, the chain-smoking dynamo had done everything her profession could offer. Then came September 11. *Corriere della Sera* very deftly tempted her out of semi-official retirement to unburden herself of her thoughts on the, er, unfortunate events. Even then, in those first weeks, the “cicadas” (as she called them) of cultural relativism were chirruping their pneumatic songs of eternal evasion. In her best-selling post-9/11 improvised arias, La Fallaci was certainly shrill, but perhaps not as shrill as those who in the face of a mountain of evidence insist—from every university, every interior ministry, every Anglican pulpit—that there’s nothing to see here, nothing to ask, nothing to ponder, no great questions over Europe’s future.

She had never lacked bravery. Indeed, she was almost insanely brave. But this wasn’t like flipping the bird to some strutting generalissimo. She must have been surprised by how organized the Muslim opposition was: the Islamic Center of Berne, the Somali Association of Geneva, the SOS Racism of Lausanne, and a group of Muslim immigrants in Neuchâtel, just to name a random sampling of Swiss plaintiffs. What would not have surprised her was the weirdly mas-



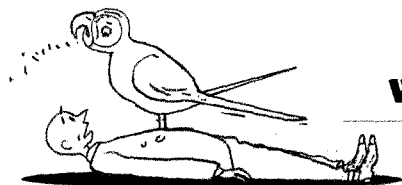
ochistic pleasure the European judiciary derived from facilitating their attempts to silence her. The Federal Office of Justice in Berne asked the Italian government to extradite her so she could be charged under Article 261b of the Swiss Criminal Code—or, as she called it, the “He-didn’t-chase-me-because-I’m-a-thief-but-because-I’m-a-Muslim” clause. She was sued in France, where suits against writers are routine now. An Italian magistrate indicted her and, because of the European Arrest Warrant, which includes charges of “xenophobia” as grounds for extradition from one EU nation to another, most of the Continent became unsafe for her to set foot in. Only in her last ten days, when she knew she would

not live to make her first court date, did she return from political exile to die in a hometown defiled less by immigrant urine than by the watery emissions of incontinent fainthearts and appeasers.

I never really thought cancer would get Oriana Fallaci. She seemed so full of fire in the last few years that one felt certain any tumor would shrivel to ash inside her. But the legal harassment must have taken its toll. The books were huge sellers, but old friends kept their distance. As for those on the left who acknowledged the threat, she parted company with them, too. This year, a dozen intellectuals, including Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Salman Rushdie, published a manifesto against Islamism and in defense of “secular values for all.” All are doughty warriors and important allies in Europe’s present struggle. But La Fallaci, a lifelong atheist, had come to the conclusion that secular humanism was an insufficient rallying cry, that it had in some sense led to the gaping nullity of contemporary European identity, which Islam had simply steamrolled. By the end, she was, if not a Christian, then (as she formulated it) a “Christian atheist.” In 2005 she was granted a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI on the understanding that she

would never divulge what was discussed. It would be interesting to know, but it’s safe to say that for once it wasn’t, “Go fuck yourself. I say what I want.”

At the height of her fame thirty years ago, Oriana Fallaci seemed to embody the triumph of the post-Christian West. The apotheosis of the independent, emancipated woman, she lived long enough to understand that hyper-rationalism was, in point of fact, wholly irrational, and she was big enough to change her mind on that without changing her glorious voice. She was a beautiful writer. If her sin is that she went too far, in a craven culture that recoils even from first steps, that is not the worst. Brava, La Fallaci. ▀



WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

In the July/August issue, we sought a catchall term for the heap of stuff new parents suddenly find themselves toting around along with their baby. As it turns out, many parents already have their own words for this. For instance, Dennis Fortier, of Laguna Niguel, Calif., wrote, "In my home, we refer to these items as *parentphernalia*." In fact, dozens of readers suggested that word. However, a few mentioned it in order to explain why, after it came to mind, they ruled it out. James Olski, of Appleton, Wis., presented the usual objection succinctly. "*Parentphernalia* unfortunately seemed to grasp the concept from the wrong end," he wrote, adding, "Wouldn't *parentphernalia* include vodka?" Readers of a similar turn of mind suggested alternatives such as *babyphernalia*, *pedephernalia*, *heiraphernalia*, *pueriphernalia*, and *paraphernalia*.

Clare Conway, of Arlington, Mass., wrote, "We always called it our *baby safari*, but on the face of it, this phrase looks like we were hunting babies." Sean Conboy, of San Francisco, and a new father, suggested *postpartum possessions*. James Wunsch, of Irondequoit, N.Y., had not only a word but also a procedure to suggest. He wrote, "Bitter experience—many trips back home to fetch a favorite rattle or medicine du jour—prompted us to create, and religiously use, a 'preflight checklist.' This process gave us confidence, peace of mind, and greater family harmony. Though our daughters (now two and five) require less and less luggage per trip, we continue to verify our *infantory* before pulling out of the driveway."

Some other promising terms were *bairnecessities*, *child splay*, *impedimenta* (with or without a hyphen and a second *p* after *imp*), *kid and caboodle*, and *mother load*. But Joan A'Hearn, of Saratoga

Springs, N.Y., takes top honors for her unique coinage *adinfantitem*s.

Also requested was a word for the tendency to overbuy produce at the farmers' market—something the woman who asked for the word said her father-in-law did. Irwin Walkenfeld, of Highland Park, N.J., wrote, "So I'm not the only one who cannot restrain himself from overbuying produce. When I go to the market, I *go bananas*." Other ideas inspired by specific kinds of produce included *appletite*,



overcornsumption, *overdill*, *overkale*, and *economy of kale*. Mary Jane McKinven, of Washington, D.C., wrote, "The malady should be called *berry-berry*."

Rachel Hopkins, of Earlsyville, Va., reported, "When our family buys more veggies than necessary, we call it *unvegessary*." Tim McBride, of Cary, N.C., warned, "If you buy too much produce, you'll get caught up in a *rot race*." Chris Lazzarino, of Lawrence, Kan., took a similar point of view, writing, "If I bought too much beautiful produce, which surely would spoil before I could eat it, I fear I would suffer from the melancholy of *buyer's remorse*."

Refreshingly, Bill Parks, of Covington, Va., has the tendency but lacks any compunctions about it. "This condition is called *hypervegetating*," he wrote. "It makes us old guys feel both alive and necessary." A similarly unapologetic coinage earns top honors for Drew and Pamela Elicker, of Port Townsend, Wash.: *shoptimism*.

Now GERRY POSTER, of Greenville, S.C., writes: "I'm seeking a word to describe the sort of intense and absolute skill or knowledge that is required to operate something technological (such as a computer program, PDA, DVD player, or digital camera) and that will become worthless when a newer program or machine is sold. This is as compared with such tech-independent skills as reading, computation, and reasoning, whose value is more or less permanent."

And HALLIE FIVECOAT, of Fort Benning, Ga., writes, "I would like a word for the compulsion to imitate peculiar noises. Actually, my husband would like a word for this, so the next time I do it—such as when I try to imitate a birdcall or really squeaky brakes on a truck—and it doesn't occur to me that we're in public, he can tell me in very specific terms to stop."

Send words that meet Gerry Poster's or Hallie Fivecoat's needs to Word Fugitives, The Atlantic Monthly, P.O. Box 67375, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, or visit the Word Fugitives page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by December 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like The Atlantic's help in finding. Letters become the property of Word Fugitives and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment's correspondents will be sent Blind Into Baghdad, by James Fallows; Presidential Doodles, text by David Greenberg; and my own Word Fugitives.

GREG CLARKE



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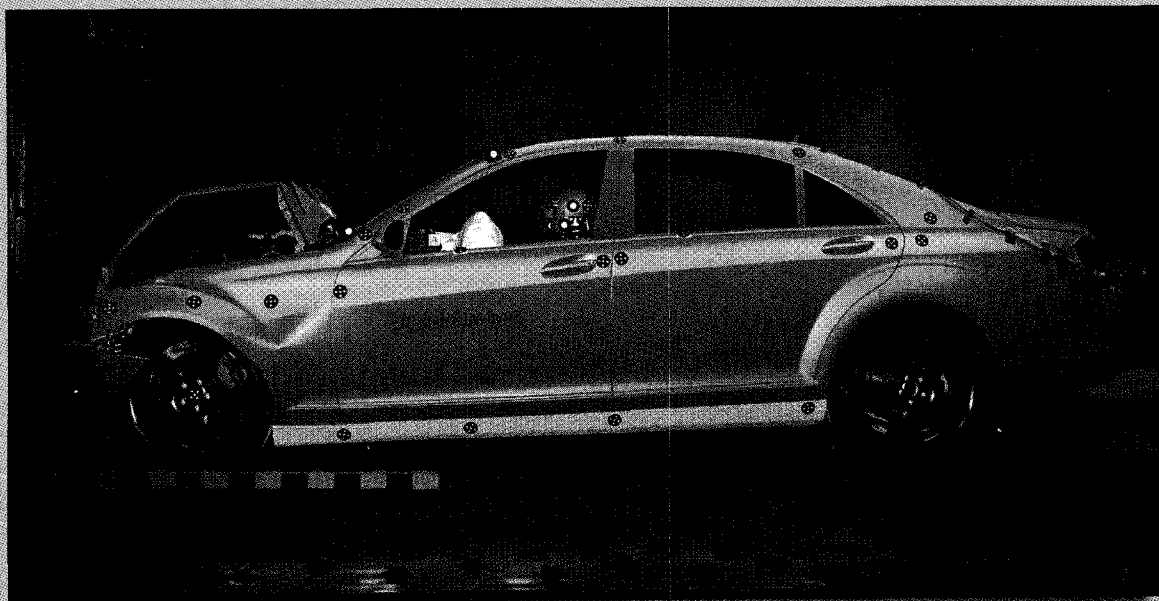
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